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MAZADA TOURS

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Mubarak: Visit to Israel now would harm Syrian track

BATSHEVA TSUR
CAIRO

EGYPT is trying to persuade Syria to move forward with the peace process, but the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty has set back Damascus's readiness to advance in that direction, President Hosni Mubarak said yesterday.

The Egyptian president also said he would not visit Israel in the very near future, because of Syrian sensitivities.

"The Syrians want peace," Mubarak stressed in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, "but for psychological reasons, Syria cannot follow Jordan. I am speaking to, and persuading President [Hafez] Assad and so on others. I thought we would see peace before the end of this year, but the Jordanian track stopped it."

Following a third round of talks with President Ezer Weizman yesterday, Mubarak said the two had exchanged views on the prospects of peace and on cooperation on the Syrian track. He confirmed that he had also spoken to Assad by telephone earlier.

"We are celebrating 17 years after our first meeting in Ismailiya and trying to pave the way to prevent obstacles," Mubarak said of his talks with Weizman.

"President Weizman is very liked in Egypt and has many friends here. And Egypt is the pivotal country in the area for peace."

Mubarak urged Israel to show greater patience until seeing results of the peace process. He took to task those who claimed that the peace with Egypt was not warm, saying that every year it gets warmer.

The time is not ripe for a visit to Israel right now, Mubarak added. "If it would solve the problems with Syria, I would come tomorrow. But if I come now, the Syrians would feel isolated. [Such a visit] would damage the chances for peace with Syria," he added.

Asked when he could expect movement on the Syrian track, Mubarak replied: "Probably next year there will be a breakthrough."

But he cautioned Israel against thinking that it would be possible to get peace with Syria along the Jordanian model. "There is public opinion in Syria too," he said, adding that Assad would never agree to a peace where "even one centimeter of the Golan Heights remained in Israeli hands."

He said he shares Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's concern about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. Egypt, Mubarak said, is cooperating on this subject not only with Israel but with other countries, as terrorism is now a worldwide problem. He said he could not predict how many votes Hamas would gain in the Palestinian elections or how much funding they would get from "the outside."

The Egyptian media yesterday gave extensive coverage to the (Continued on Page 2)

Full story, Page 4



Friends and relatives of Sgt. Hadar Kehati mourn at his funeral yesterday in Rehovot. Kehati was one of two soldiers killed in the security zone Monday. Story, Page 2. (Alois Roitman)

Peres: Peace talks with Syria won't tie IDF's hands Hizbullah leader: We will stop fighting when Israel, Syria sign peace treaty

DAVID RUDGE

THE IDF's hands are not tied by the peace negotiations with Syria, and whatever is necessary will be done to ensure peace and quiet in the North, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres stressed yesterday.

Southern Lebanon was quiet yesterday as attention focused on how and when Israel would respond to the recent wave of deadly Hizbullah attacks on the IDF and South Lebanese Army.

Peres spoke to reporters during a visit to Ibbilin village in the Galilee, a few hours before the funerals for the two IDF soldiers killed in separate attacks by Hizbullah and Palestinian gunmen in different sectors of the security zone on Monday.

"No peace negotiations will ever disturb or prevent taking the necessary protective measures to ensure peace and security in the North," said Peres.

Asked about the possibility of a response to Hizbullah along Operation Accountability lines, Peres said, "I can only say in very general terms that the operations and necessary measures to protect the line will be carried out as they should be."

He stressed there is no "policy of restraint" towards Hizbullah or other terrorist organizations operating from Lebanon. "There is a policy of weighing matters, of hitting the source of fire. In that respect there is no hesitation or restraint and I hope we will overcome them."

Peres revealed that Israel had also called on the Syrians, through US auspices, to restrain Hizbullah, but to no avail.

Nevertheless, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri made a surprise visit to Damascus yesterday and met with Syrian President Hafez Assad. No official reasons were given for the visit, although it is believed the two discussed the escalation of violence in southern Lebanon and the upcoming resumption of the peace talks between Israel and Syria.

Israel Radio reported last night that Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah said that once a peace treaty is signed between Israel and Syria, his organization will no longer continue its armed struggle and will switch to diplomacy.

Northern Command Chief of Staff Brig.-Gen. Benny Lidor told reporters yesterday there are no restraints on the army's operations in southern Lebanon.

He stressed that in the framework of the policies set (Continued on Page 2)

400,000 children said living below poverty line

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

SOME 400,000 of the nation's 1,890,600 children are living below the poverty line, 25.8% of them new immigrants and most in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, according to the National Council for Children.

The council's annual report for 1993 was presented to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin yesterday.

Council chairman Dr. Yitzhak Kadman noted with concern the sharp rise in reports of child abuse all over the country, noting that more than 820 suicide attempts by children were reported to the police by hospital emergency rooms during the year.

He emphasized the growing polarization between "those children who have plenty of not only money, but leisure, and more appropriate preparation for their future as adults, and those who do not."

The report says that 812 cases of child abuse of various kinds within the family were opened

during 1993 compared to 209 in 1990. Of these, 350 were for sexual abuse, compared to 67 in 1990.

More than 22,000 children were cared for by welfare officials, following reports of neglect and physical, sexual, and mental abuse by their families, the report states.

More than 6,000 criminal cases against minors were opened during 1993 and 1,782 arrests of minors were made. 15,000 minors were placed on probation.

The report notes that there are 6,800 one-parent families, mostly in the Dan region and Haifa.

The percentage of children living below the poverty line is highest in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, where it reached 38% in 1993, and lowest in Ramat Gan, where it is only 6.9%.

The report stresses the worsening general economic situation of many children: 128,000 of them live in families whose entire (Continued on Page 2)

Berlusconi may resign today

ROME (Reuters) - Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, his government wrecked by a revolt by his Northern League coalition partner, is considering whether to resign and will push for snap elections, ministers and aides said yesterday.

They said the billionaire media mogul, who faces three no-confidence motions including one from the federalist League, might preempt defeat in parliament and quit before a vote.

He is due to address Italy's Chamber of Deputies (lower house) today at the start of a two-day confidence debate.

"My personal opinion is that he will resign before the vote," Labour Minister Clemente Mastella told Reuters yesterday.

"The best thing for him to do would be to make his speech, listen to the replies and then go to see the president and resign," Mastella said.

Deputy prime minister Giuseppe Tatarella, the senior member of the far right National Alliance in Berlusconi's five-party government, had earlier portrayed resignation as certain.

Israel to offer Arafat partial IDF pullback

DAVID MAKOVSKY
and BILL HUTMAN

ISRAEL will today formally offer the Palestinians an IDF pullback from some Palestinian population centers and ask that further redeployment be left open to negotiation, senior officials said yesterday.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is to present the proposals to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at a meeting at the Erez checkpoint.

Meanwhile, Palestinian officials also put forward two separate proposals for partial IDF redeployment. But both insisted that the partial pullback be linked to a firm timetable for the army's withdrawal from the rest of the Palestinian population centers in the territories.

The PLO would look favorably on a "Jenin/Bethlehem First" proposal, if it is presented together with a schedule for redeployment from the rest of Palestinian population centers, PLO representative in Jerusalem Faisal Husseini said yesterday.

"We don't want to be left with a situation in which we will be left with only 'islands' under our control," Husseini said.

Husseini was speaking to reporters at Orient House, the PLO headquarters in eastern Jerusalem, after briefing nine foreign consuls on the peace talks.

Palestinian Authority Economics Minister Ahmed Oreia, who was the top Palestinian negotiator in Oslo, also called for a timetable for further withdrawal as a condition for an initial partial pullback.

"We might accept dividing the West Bank into two parts from east to west. Withdrawal would start from one part, according to an agreed timetable, and then be followed by withdrawal from the other part in no more than one month. But there would have to be an agreed timetable for the whole process," Oreia told Reuters yesterday.

Israeli officials, however, denied there is any plan to designate specific areas such as Jenin and Bethlehem at the Peres-Arafat meeting.

"This focus on specific areas now, such as Jenin or Bethlehem, is nonsense," a Foreign Ministry official said last night.

"We are not into specifics now," he said. "The question at hand is the following: Do we deal with all issues at once - in which case we won't make a lot of progress - or do we hold negotiations now on Palestinian elections, transfer of civilian authority in the territories and partial redeployment as a package, which will serve as a prelude to negotiations later on more redeployment?"

Even partial redeployment would be a change in the Israeli position. Just last week, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was suggesting that the Palestinians would have to forgo IDF redeployment altogether in return for early elections.

Palestinians have charged that anything less than full redeployment would be a violation of the Oslo accords, while Israeli officials have noted that the PLO has not been able to control terrorism in the areas it controls, and that full redeployment would make it impossible for Israel to protect all the 120,000 settlers in the territories.

Asked about today's Peres-Arafat meeting, Husseini said, "The only subject that is of any importance is implementation of the next stage of the agreement."

The two sides must "review each point in the agreement, everything from the redeployment of the IDF and the completion of turning over power [to the Palestinians]," Husseini said.

Husseini also told reporters that during his meeting with the foreign consuls, he voiced Palestinian objections to Israel's alleged recent push to construct Jewish housing in eastern Jerusalem.

"What Israel is doing [in Jerusalem] is in violation of the Declaration of Principles," Husseini said.

Gaza/Jericho debate, Page 2

Ramon: We won't accept COL cut

MICHAEL YUDELMAN
JOSE ROSENFELD
and AMIR ROZENBLIT

HISTADRUT Chairman Haim Ramon yesterday denied reports the Histadrut would agree to reduce the cost-of-living increment as part of a package deal with the government and employers.

He also called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat to reject the manufacturers' demand to devalue the shekel.

Meanwhile, Shohat criticized Ramon for saying yesterday that if inflation exceeds 10% a year, the COL increase should be linked to it.

"If Haim Ramon is worried about inflation, he knows there are several things that need to be done to lower inflation, and I hope he'll act accordingly in negotiations. He can have a great deal to do with determining what inflation will be," Shohat said.

"It will be very difficult to deal with inflation if Ramon continues saying that the only factor that influences the scope of inflation is the COL increment, without doing several other things he is authorized to do. All elements have to contribute to this [reducing inflation] - the government, the Bank of Israel and the employers... He has to show he can handle the main problem, and not just marginal matters."

The Treasury, for its part, announced that should the plan to cut the COL increment get bogged down, it will propose

cutting the health tax employers pay on behalf of their workers.

Finance Ministry Director-General Aharon Fogel yesterday said that if the Histadrut's demands prove too difficult to meet, the government will lower by 2 percent the employer's portion of the health tax (*mas-makbil*), which now stands at 4.95%.

TASE rises almost 3%, Page 9

Employees' COL wage adjustment would thus remain unchanged, while they will pay the full 4.8% health tax. The original plan calls for workers to give up 2% of their COL wage adjustment in return for a 1.4% cut in the health tax.

Fogel said either way would help lower labor costs to employers and contribute to profitability. The new option would also cost the Treasury NIS 850m.

Ramon's commitment to sign a package deal by mid-January aroused concern and ferment in the Histadrut coalition. Joint Jewish-Arab List leader and executive member Binyamin Gonen said: "We are afraid the tight time schedule will enable Ramon to lend a hand to reducing the cost-of-living increment."

My fear is this hurry indicates a readiness to sell the cost-of-living increment for a bowl of porridge, and leave the workers completely naked and defenseless in the face of galloping inflation."

Histadrut Trade Union leader MK Amir Peretz, who urged to postpone the package deal to next August, said he prefers to wait and prepare properly for the negotiations. He said it is vital "to know exactly what the cost of living raise formula for the next two years will be, rather than basing the deal on the old formula which is not applicable to today's inflation rates. In addition, the wage earner must get used to new taxation systems, both in National Insurance and income tax, which will affect wages."

Ramon firmly denied reports he might agree to cut back the COL increment in exchange for the government's subsidizing the Histadrut's pension funds, stating that "the era in which the Histadrut traded and speculated in the workers' cost of living raise in the interest of its institutions is over. In the past they did that for Kapat Holim, but this will not happen again."

Meanwhile, the contractors reacted with surprise to the economic summit meeting on how to reach a package deal, to which they were not invited, and threatened yesterday they would not cooperate unless they are part of discussions.



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Shira Shikolnik

Ben-Yair urges High Court restraint over Basic Laws

ATTORNEY-GENERAL Michael Ben-Yair yesterday urged the High Court of Justice not to go too far in its interpretation of the Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation and Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom, when it comes to determining whether ordinary legislation is constitutional or not.

Addressing the Knesset Law Committee, Ben-Yair said that now, only two years after passage of the legislation, "The court should choose the inductive approach, whereby the instructions of the basic laws should be fulfilled gradually, in stages and one case at a time."

"This will make it possible to consolidate an appropriate and balanced approach among all the different considerations, thus integrating the 'constitutional revolution' into the entire society, and particularly the three governing authorities," he said.

Yesterday's committee discussion was the second in a series of meetings on the relations be-

tween the Knesset and the Supreme Court.

Committee chairman Dedi Zucker originally called for the discussion in order to consolidate Knesset opinion on the question of what court echelon should be empowered to judge Knesset legislation and disqualify it if it violates the basic laws. For lack of any other decision on the matter so far, any court can repudiate a Knesset law on these grounds.

The committee discussion has assumed greater urgency over the past two weeks, after Shlomo Benizri (Shas) and Yigal Bibi (National Religious Party) launched attacks on the High Court of Justice and called for blocking the accession of Justice Aharon Barak to the court presidency next August.

Barak is under fire for a recent ruling recognizing homosexual live-in partners as having the same rights as heterosexual live-in partners. He is also the cham-

pin of an activist role for the court, including its right to expansively interpret the human rights legislation.

Ben-Yair provided other arguments for urging the court to slow down:

● The status of the two basic laws are not identical. The provisions included in the Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation restricting legislation infringing on this right are stronger than the ones included in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom. The anomaly between the two laws will make it more difficult for the court to justify its disqualification of Knesset legislation.

● The rights protected by the basic law are not of equal value. Each right has its own weight and its own degree of necessary protection. If the court gives the same weight to every right, it could create a lower common denominator and weaken protection of more important rights.

Ben-Yair said the basic laws had introduced into the statute books concepts which lie at the heart of national sentiment, such as the principles included in the Declaration of Independence and the concept of the "values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state."

MK Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism) called on Supreme Court President Meir Shamgar to dismiss Justice Yitzhak Zamir. Last week, Zamir warned that the court could not continue to be effective without public support and called on the people to protect it.

MK Silvan Shalom (Likud) said the Supreme Court in its present constellation represents only 15 percent of the population. "I'm not sure the values of the secular, Ashkenazi male are representative of the values of the entire society," said Shalom, who pointed out that there were only two women, one religious man, and one Sephardi on the 14-member bench.

Four found guilty in Old City grenade murder

THE Jerusalem District Court yesterday convicted four young men of murder, planning a murder, and conspiracy in the throwing of a grenade in the Butchers' Market of the capital's Old City two years ago, which killed one man and wounded eight others.

Judges Ya'acov Bazak, Ya'acov Zemah, and Ruth Orr said it had been proven that one of the four had thrown the grenade in

cold blood, while the others were full accomplices, each sharing a task in the plot.

The four, who had been active in the Kach movement, formed a group called the Revenge Commandos, which aimed to avenge the murder of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

In October 1992, several of the youths stole a grenade from an army vehicle whose driver gave

them a ride. They planned the attack for the following month, to mark the second anniversary of Kahane's murder.

The four divided the tasks by lot: one would throw the grenade, two would keep watch and make sure that no Jews were walking through the market when the attack took place, and one would inform the media of the attack.

One of the four backed out of the plan at the last minute, but the judges noted that since he was the leader of the group, his backing out was too little, too late.

The attack, on November 16, killed Abed Razak Adkaidik, 62. The four, one from Jerusalem and three from Kfar Tapuah in Samaria, were arrested seven months later. (Tim)

Marathon debate expected for bills on Cairo accord

DAN IZENBERG

THE Knesset was last night due to begin a marathon debate on the final reading of three bills linked to the implementation of the Cairo Agreement signed between Israel and the PLO.

Two of the three bills are necessary to amend existing laws so they will coincide with the terms of the agreement. The third bill places constraints on the PLO's activities inside Israel and constitutes the government's response to the increased activity of the PLO at Orient House and elsewhere in eastern Jerusalem.

According to an agreement reached last night, the Knesset was to adjourn at 2 a.m. and resume the debate at 6 this morning.

The three proposals were approved in first reading a few weeks ago as a single bill. However, the government was forced to separate the Jerusalem section

from the others, because it had difficulty mobilizing a majority for the legislation as a single block.

The Likud refused to support the comprehensive bill, because it opposes the Oslo and Cairo Accords. The Democratic Arab Party and the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality refused to support it, because of the Jerusalem section. By splitting it in final reading, the government expects to win different majorities for each section.

Yesterday, Likud MK Michael Eitan dictated at least 100 alternative proposals to the legislation, while the party's Limor Livnat and David Mena chipped in dozens more. Eitan said he was launching a filibuster to delay the transfer of funds by the government to the Palestinian Authority.

Shaath: Return bodies of Hamas men

JON IMMANUEL

PALESTINIAN Authority Planning Minister Nabil Shaath said yesterday Israel should return the bodies of two Hamas killers and not wait for the return of the body of soldier Ilan Sa'adon.

"The delay in returning the bodies back to the Palestinians is rejected for religious and humanitarian reasons," Shaath told reporters in Gaza.

Shaath's complaints echoed those of Hamas activists, who accused Israel of seeking to swap Sa'adon's body for the bodies of Hassan Abbas and Salah Jadallah. Abbas was killed during the attack in the Nahalat Shiva mall in Jerusalem and Jadallah in the attempt to free kidnapped soldier Nahshon Wachsmann.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

The weekly meeting of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will take place today at 1 p.m. at the YMCA, King David Street. Journalist Michael Elkins will address the club.

With deep sorrow, we announce the death of our beloved mother, grandmother and sister

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The funeral will take place at the Kfar Saba New Cemetery, Rehov Nordau, Kfar Saba, today at 2 p.m.

We offer deepest sympathy to our colleague

Michael Marshall

on the death in London of his

Mother

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Two killed in road accidents

A 20-year-old woman from the South was killed yesterday afternoon after the car she was riding in collided with another vehicle at the Kfar Silver junction near Ashkelon. Both drivers were injured in the crash.

In Sderot last night, Meir Michaelson, 47, was killed when the car he was driving collided with a truck. Initial police investigations indicate the Michaelson was intoxicated.

A total of 1,656 traffic accidents involving injuries were registered by the police last month. In these, 38 persons died and 298 were seriously injured. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, accidents were down 2 percent over the past three months, in comparison with the preceding three-month period.

Fatah takes elections at Al-Azhar

In male student elections at Gaza's Al-Azhar University yesterday, the Fatah faction won 76.6% of the vote in a five-way contest including Islamic groups. They took all nine student council seats, which was expected since Al-Azhar is considered a Fatah institution.

Men and women vote separately at Al-Azhar in deference to Islamic mores. Women vote today.

In student elections earlier this month at the nearby Islamic University, Hamas and Islamic Jihad ran unopposed. Hamas took more than 90% of the votes.

Winning numbers and cards

In last night's weekly Lotto draw, the winning numbers were 1, 9, 16, 22, 35, and 48, and the additional number was 42. In Mifal Hapayis daily Chance draw, the lucky cards were the jack of spades, ace of hearts, queen of diamonds, and king of clubs.

PERES

(Continued from Page 1)

by the government, the army has "enough activities and methods to find the right way to hit the terrorist organizations and try to prevent their operations in southern Lebanon."

"We carry out the missions and operations according to what OC Northern Command sees as right. Of course, there are restrictions which are also accepted by us, as regards [avoiding] hitting civilians, which are not specifically connected to southern Lebanon," said Lidor, making his first appearance before the press since taking over the post.

He said the inquiry into Hizbullah's long-range attack on the IDF's outpost near Talousa on Monday had revealed that the troops had acted properly, despite the unfortunate death of Sgt. Hadar Kehati, who was hit by shrapnel.

Lidor said the troops had returned fire quickly and accurately, forcing the terrorists to cease shooting and flee from the area. The results of the latter incident on Monday, however, in which Maj. Kiwan Hamed was killed, were not so satisfactory, he said, because the gunmen who ambushed the patrol near A-Tireh village had apparently managed to escape unharmed.

Meanwhile, SLA commander Gen. Antoine Lahad has hinted that his force and the IDF would respond to the latest wave of Hizbullah attacks.

Lahad was quoted in Lebanese newspapers yesterday as saying that Hizbullah leader Sheikh

Hassan Nasrallah could only fight Israel through the media.

"The IDF and the SLA are much stronger than he [Nasrallah] thinks and the coming days will prove this," Lahad was quoted as saying. The newspapers said Lahad spoke during a visit on Sunday to the Jezzeine enclave, north of the zone. The reports said he was accompanied on the visit by the head of the IDF's Lebanese Liaison Unit, Brig-Gen. Giora Inbar.

The Lebanese newspapers also reported that a military court in Beirut had tried, judged, and sentenced "in absentia" four SLA soldiers to 15 years imprisonment and hard labor.

MUBARAK

(Continued from Page 1)

Weizman visit. The English-language *Egyptian Gazette* ran a front-page banner headline about Weizman and the talks, but quoted Foreign Minister Amr Moussa as saying Egypt was pressing Israel in nuclear non-proliferation.

Commenting to reporters later, Weizman said Israel would not agree to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty until there is full peace in the Middle East. The president added that in his talks new ideas about the peace talks with Syria had been raised.

Last night, Weizman hosted a reception for the Egyptians at the Semiramis Hotel. Members of the Sadat family were present.



Members of the Druse community yesterday pay their last respects to Maj. Kiwan Hamed, who was killed in a Hizbullah ambush in the security zone on Monday. (AP)

Hundreds attend funeral of two soldiers killed in security zone ambushes

DAVID RUDGE and Tim

HUNDREDS of people attended the funerals yesterday of the two IDF soldiers killed in Hizbullah ambushes in the security zone on Monday.

Maj. Kiwan Hamed, 30, of Maghar, in lower Galilee, was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Druse village where he was born and raised.

OC Northern Command Maj-Gen. Amiram Levine vowed at the ceremony that Jews and Druse would continue the battle against the terrorists from Lebanon.

"The IDF and Northern Command are lowering the flag today in the presence of the bravery of Kiwan who led the charge against a squad of murderers who, at close quarters, opened fire from ambush," said Levine.

MK Assad Assad (Likud) called on the government not to

yield to Lebanese-based terrorism, and to give the IDF a free hand in taking whatever actions are necessary.

Assad was among other MKs, senior IDF officers, and soldiers, as well as members of the Druse community from throughout the Galilee, who attended the funeral.

Maghar local council head Assad Araidy said the death of Hamed brought to 254 the number of Druse who had been killed in the line of duty since the establishment of the State.

"Kiwan only married last summer and he had built a new home with many hopes and aspirations for the future, all of which have now been shattered," Araidy said.

In Rehovot, Sgt. Hadar Kehati was laid to rest yesterday in the city's military cemetery.

Hundreds of people, including Rehovot residents, childhood friends, and Golani Brigade soldiers, attended the ceremony. Kehati's brigade commander eulogized the fallen soldier, saying, "You served a year and two months in the brigade. You were more than any other soldier in the unit, a professional."

"You always wanted to be first - the first to return fire and man the post and to fight to defend the northern settlements," he said.

Rehovot Mayor Ya'acov Sandler said: "As long as there is no peace treaty with Syria and Lebanon, we have no choice but to continue to fight against guerrillas, because if we don't they will infiltrate the Galilee and attack our people."

Tunisian chief rabbi here on first visit

HERB KEINON

and it is good now. The only difference is that now we host visitors from Israel who used to live in Tunisia."

Asked whether Tunisia's Jews are able to practice their religion openly, Madar replied, "Yes, why not?"

Madar presented Bakshi-Doron with two ancient halachic manuscripts penned by Tunisian rabbis. They discussed bringing

manuscripts to Israel and setting up an institution to study the Tunisian Jewish heritage.

An aide to Bakshi-Doron said that over the years communications with Madar largely dealt with halachic problems facing the community. Madar, who comes from the island of Djerba, was selected by the community to be their chief rabbi, and has served in that position for some 10 years. He is the Jewish community's representative to the Tunisian government.

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Rubinstein considers high school smoking rooms

JUDY SIEGEL

EDUCATION Minister Amnon Rubinstein, who is coming under pressure from teenagers who want smoking rooms set aside for them inside their high schools, said he plans to convene a "pedagogical meeting" of experts to discuss it.

Rubinstein, who says he is adamantly against smoking, said he "personally opposes such an idea, as it would legitimize smoking."

At the Knesset Anti-Drug Committee meeting on Monday, Rubinstein said he received reports from teachers and principals that numerous high school pupils leave the school buildings to smoke.

Dr. Tuviya Lehrer, chairman of the Israel Society for the Prevention of Smoking, yesterday sent a strong protest to Rubinstein, noting that the society had received numerous complaints from pupils about teachers breaking existing no-smoking laws by smoking "not only in teachers' rooms and corridors, but also in classrooms while teaching."

Lehrer noted that, by law, pupils may not smoke in schools and staff may smoke only in specially designated smoking rooms. In fact, he said, most teachers who smoke do so in the regular teachers' rooms, imposing themselves on non-smoking colleagues.

Establishing smoking rooms for pupils would give this harmful practice legitimacy, Lehrer said. The ministry has failed until now to include lessons on the dangers of smoking in the curriculum from the lowest grades, he wrote to the minister, although it does teach high school pupils about the risks of alcohol and hard drugs.

The society chairman added that the World Health Organization has recommended to all member nations, including Israel, to ban the sale of tobacco products to youngsters under the age of 18, and to ban vending machines that sell cigarettes. Israel has no such age limit, and cigarette vending machines are becoming increasingly common.

An Education Ministry spokeswoman said that inspectors and teachers are aware of the rules about smoking in school. She added that "an increasing number of schools have established separate smoking rooms for teachers, that do not admit pupils."

The ministry is currently preparing a teaching program for the higher grades on the hazards of smoking, she added.

Two remanded for counterfeiting

THE police have uncovered a gang which intended to produce and sell counterfeit dollars here and abroad, apparently in Hungary.

Petah Tikva Magistrate's Court Judge Hanan Efrati yesterday extended the remand of Shabtai Hananshivili, 63, by seven days and Sergei Trovianakov, 36, by three days. The two are suspected of planning and carrying out the counterfeiting.

Efrati said the investigation is complex and includes many suspects. The counterfeiters made \$100 bills.

Police said Hananshivili, of Holon, was only recently released from prison after serving a sentence for counterfeiting dollars. Trovianakov is a printer who was allegedly hired to work in the ring.

According to the police, some of the suspects were arrested at Ben-Gurion Airport on their way abroad to distribute the counterfeit dollars. Efrati said the connection between the suspects had been proven beyond a doubt, and ordered their remands extended. (Jlm)



Newly arrived tourists inaugurate Ben-Gurion Airport's NIS 22 million arrivals hall, which opened yesterday.

Plan to bulletproof buses draws fire

HERB KEINON

A PLAN to bulletproof a number of buses plying routes in Judea and Samaria is being opposed by some Kiryat Arba and Hebron settlers, who say armored buses would mean running away from terror, rather than dealing with it directly.

Egged and the Transportation and Defense ministries have for several months been trying to bulletproof an Egged bus, hoping eventually to put five of them into use in Judea and Samaria.

Egged spokesman Ron Rainer confirmed yesterday that the work has been taking place at Kibbutz Beit Alfa. He said he did not know the cost, but that it is coming from a special fund set up by Egged and the two ministries.

According to Rainer, one bus

has been made bulletproof, but weighs considerably more than normal and has so far proven to be very slow and unwieldy. Once a better model is developed, it will run on an experimental basis in Judea and Samaria, to be followed by four similar buses.

The issue has raised something of a furor in Kiryat Arba, where council head Zvi Katzover has been lobbying for armored buses on the Jerusalem-Kiryat Arba route.

"We are hoping that five such buses will be made bulletproof, and that after that, all the buses to Kiryat Arba will be bulletproof," Katzover said.

But handbills have appeared in the community over the last few days opposed to the plan, saying it "demonstrates weakness and will lead to a desecration of God's name."

According to the handbill, signed by the Kach faction in the local council, this move will "lead to the deterioration of security for the hundreds of vehicles that don't have similar protection, and will deter the thousands of people who visit Hebron from visiting, unless they have similar protection."

Hebron settlement head Noam Arnon said he is "completely opposed" to the plan. "Nothing will

be achieved by this," Arnon said. "The terrorists have RPGs. The way to deal with terrorism is not to run away, but to destroy the terrorists."

Katzover fended off this criticism, saying there are residents in his settlement who have not left Kiryat Arba for two to three months, because they are afraid of driving on the roads. "All those who are criticizing this plan drive in cars with rock-proof windows," he said.

Arnon, who does drive in a car with rock-proof windows, said introducing these windows at the beginning of the intifada was a mistake, since they provide a degree of individual protection, without dealing directly with the terrorists.

Israel tops Japan, England per capita in terms of people pursuing higher education

ISRAEL ranks ahead of Japan, England, Sweden, and Holland in the percentage of individuals who pursue higher education, the Council of Higher Education announced yesterday.

The percentage of those receiving bachelor's degrees in an average year is higher than France, Germany, Sweden, Italy, and Holland, the budget and planning department announced. Prof. Amnon Pazi, chairman of the department, said efforts have been made in recent years to offer a greater variety of higher education opportunities, with the opening of various junior colleges.

This has led to an increase in the number of students in institutions of higher learning, from

76,100 in 1990 to 109,500 in 1994. The largest increase was among those pursuing bachelor's degrees, about 10 percent a year, while those pursuing higher degrees is up about 8% a year.

The increase has necessitated a similar increase in staff at the nation's institutions of higher learning, with 800 more staff added in the past four years.

Council director Guri Zilkha said Israel spends more on higher education than Western European nations, on a relative basis.

Israel spends \$11,000 per student, compared to \$9,000 in England, \$6,300 in Germany, \$7,600 in Japan, and \$5,900 in France. The US spends \$13,600. (Jlm)

Knesset panel approves bill linking 'absorption basket' to inflation

Jerusalem Post Staff

OVERRIDING government opposition, the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee yesterday approved a bill for final reading which will link the "absorption basket" for new immigrants to inflation.

The bill, initiated by MK Ephraim Gur (Likud), is to be brought to the Knesset plenum today for a vote.

Absorption basket funds will be increased by 25 percent next month according to the bill,

which will require the government to add NIS 117 million to the 1995 state budget.

According to the bill, the absorption basket will be updated every January, April, June, and October in accordance with the rise in the Cost of Living Index.

The absorption minister will be entitled to adjust parts of the basket at a rate that is more or less than the increase in inflation, provided the total basket is adjusted to the COL.

Reserve duty cut for those over 40

Guidelines being set on cellular phones

DAN IZENBERG

RESERVE soldiers over the age of 40 will serve no more than 26 days next year and in 1996 those above the age of 42 will be released from active service, OC Manpower Branch Maj.-Gen. Yoram Ya'ir said yesterday.

Ya'ir was addressing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on the army's plans to ease the burden of reserve duty. Until this goal is achieved in a significant way, no consideration will be given to shortening the length of the three-year compulsory service, he told the committee.

Ya'ir listed a series of additional steps aimed at lightening the reserve duty burden, including:

- granting additional reserve days to army units so that more soldiers will be called up and the distribution will be more equitable;
- assigning the appropriate size of unit or appropriate number or type of soldiers to perform a given task;
- training more new immigrants for reserve duty;
- substituting regular army units for reserve units;
- severely cutting back the right of commanders to call up soldiers for "special" duty.

The army is also investigating

the possibility of paying soldiers NIS 100 a day for every day of service beyond a certain quota.

In another matter, Ya'ir said the IDF is close to drafting a policy regarding the use of cellular telephones by soldiers. He said soldiers would be banned from using the phones during operational duty, training exercises, or other kinds of active duty, but would be allowed to use them during rest periods, on weekends, and in making preparations for leave.

The army is also seeking to improve the conditions of divisional commanders, who, according to Ya'ir, face the greatest hardship in reserve service. They will receive computers and be given rented cars 40 days a year. The army will reduce the red tape involved in reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses and has also promised to enforce disciplinary measures against soldiers who go AWOL.

Ran Cohen (Meretz) said that only if more commanders are prepared to serve in risky areas and if some army responsibilities are transferred to the police, would it be possible to reduce the number of military service days on operational active to the "yearned-for goal" of 21 days.

Reservists who seek less service are demoralizing IDF - MK Peled

MK MOSHE Peled (Tsomet) yesterday infuriated dozens of members of an organization of reserve soldiers fighting to reduce reserve duty by accusing them of demoralizing the army.

Peled said the IDF is cutting back the number of annual reserve days, but could not reduce combat soldiers' service. He rejected calls by other MKs, including Ovadia Eli (Likud) and Shaul Yahalom (NRP), to call up more non-combat soldiers or those who have not served for a long time and use them for some functions performed by combat troops.

"We hear every day about how the security situation is getting worse, about the terrorists' sophistication and daring," said

Peled. "I do not believe any commander would agree to accept a soldier from less well-trained sections of the army into his unit. If the commander did, his troops would refuse to go out on patrol with the soldier."

Ra'anan Cohen (Labor), the head of a Knesset caucus working parallel to the organization of soldiers, said the two groups will fight for legislation limiting the number of annual reserve days to 21. Anyone exceeding the quota would receive special payment.

Ofir Hargil, head of the reserve soldiers' organization, said he is the only one among his family and friends still performing reserve duty. "I feel like a sucker," he said. Dan Izenberg

Splinter Masorti group opposes 'leftist leanings'

HAIM SHAPIRO

A GROUP within Israel's Masorti (Conservative) Movement has charged that the movement has gone too far left, politically and religiously.

The opposition group, led by Rabbi Avraham Feder of the Moshesh Yisrael Congregation in Jerusalem, presented a paper at the movement's annual conference yesterday in Netanya. He said it is wrong for the Masorti Movement to cooperate with Israel's Reform Movement and with Hemedat, the coalition for religious freedom, which held demonstrations on Shabbat.

The group also opposed what it called the active encouragement of breaking Israeli law, under which it is impossible for a Masorti rabbi to register a marriage. The movement has arranged for couples to go to Cyprus for civil marriages, after which they have a religious marriage ceremony in Israel, conducted by a Masorti rabbi.

Rabbi Pinchas Spectre, director of the movement, said the movement welcomed criticism and that the group's strongest point is that the movement has to do more to fight secularization in Israel. "However, we say that the 'haredization' of Jerusalem is also a problem," Spectre added.

Sarid sees danger in quick expansion of Beit Shemesh

LIAT COLLINS

BEIT SHEMESH, expected to grow from 24,000 residents to 100,000, must ensure this development does not harm natural or historic assets, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said yesterday during a tour of the town.

Sarid warned against hasty mistakes. "Speedy planning can give rise to mistakes which are the bane of generations to come," he said.

The ministry is opposing plans for development of the Beit Janal area, which it wants to preserve as a nature site, even though construction there has been approved by the regional planning board.

Sarid told Beit Shemesh Mayor Danny Vaknin that the ministry would not allow houses that are not connected to a proper sewerage infrastructure to be built or occupied.

He also said the upgrading of the current sewage treatment plant, which is inadequate for the needs of the town and Mateh Yehuda region, will receive ministry priority and a NIS 26 million budget over the next three years. Sarid suggested the town consider carrying solid waste by train to the Dudaim landfill in the Negev, to eliminate problematic garbage dumps.

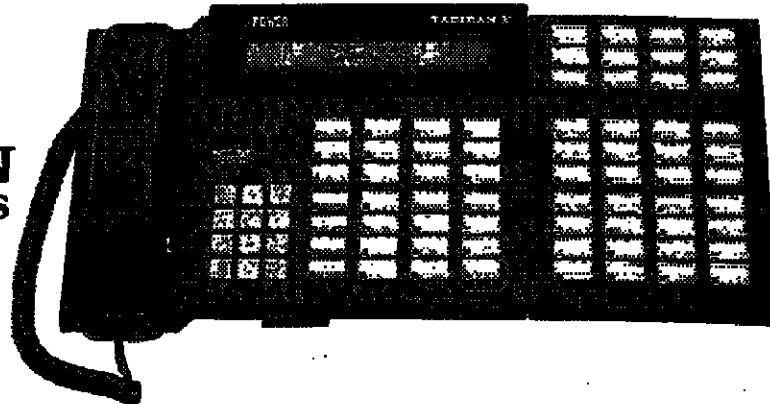
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Chechens take to the streets in protest

SERGEI SHARGORODSKY
GROZNY, Russia

AS more Russian rockets slammed into their capital yesterday, several hundred thousand residents of Chechnya and neighboring regions formed a human chain stretching for kilometers to demand an end to the offensive.

Their leaders, reportedly having sought refuge in a bomb shelter in besieged Grozny, denounced what President Dzhokhar Dudayev called the "mass killing of peaceful citizens." They claimed 120 people had been killed in overnight air raids ending yesterday morning.

The Russian government acknowledged in a statement that the situation in Grozny "is becoming more and more tragic." But it heaped new blame on Dudayev for holding the population "hostage" to his defiant policies, and vowed it would clear armed gangs and fighters out of the city within the next few days.

Nine days after 10,000 to 40,000 Russian troops entered the breakaway region of southern Russia to end Dudayev's "criminal" regime and reassert its authority, there were only defiant, war-like statements from both sides.

In an effort to seal off the explosive mountain region, Russia announced on official radio that it was closing its borders with Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Only the citizens spoke of peace.

Standing as a wet snow fell in the Northern Caucasus, men, women and children clasped hands along the main road through secessionist Chechnya and across the neighboring regions of Dagestan to the east and



Sixty-nine-year-old Pula Adayeva holds her head in despair yesterday in front of the remains of her home, which was destroyed by Russian rockets in an attack on Grozny. (AP)

Ingushetia to the west.

Like Chechnya, both areas are populated mainly by Moslems. It was the most serious protest to date against the Russian military action in the region of 1.2 million people.

Some held hands and sang, or waved small flags bearing Chechnya's green, white and red colors. Many handwritten signs proclaimed "Freedom to

Chechnya."

Entire villages stood at the roadside waving at passing cars. In a protest initiated by Dudayev and the Confederation of Caucasian Peoples.

A woman in the village of Angun, north of Grozny, held a baby in her arms, a placard hanging from the child's neck reading "Yeltsin, I Want to Live."

People elsewhere in Russia,

too, vehemently opposed the Kremlin's offensive.

In a poll of 2,500 people in Moscow and St. Petersburg, 75 percent said the government's actions in Chechnya were a massive violation of Chechens' human rights, and 85 percent said there should have been no bombing attacks on Grozny.

The poll carried a margin of error of plus or minus 1 percent.

Meanwhile, in central Grozny, tearful residents and silent armed men looked in grief and anger at piles of brick and wood — all that was left of about eight one-story houses destroyed in a Russian bombing raid Monday night.

Echo Moscow radio station, quoting Chechnya's media spokesman Movladi Udugov, said 120 people were killed in the series of air raids (AP)

Prague police seize 3kg. of top-grade uranium

PRAGUE (AP) — More than three kilograms of weapons-grade uranium believed to have come from Russia has been seized and three men arrested, police said.

An International Atomic Energy Agency spokesman said it wasn't enough uranium to build an atomic bomb, but the seizure underlined concerns about dangerous materials being smuggled out of the former Soviet Union.

No details were given about the origin of the highly enriched uranium. But Interior Ministry spokesman Jan Subrt said Monday the usual procedure is to smuggle uranium from Russia to western Europe, which serves as transit point until buyers are found.

There have been at least four

cases of illegal smuggling of nuclear substances allegedly from the former Soviet Union through third countries into Germany this year. Subrt said most of the nuclear shipments recently intercepted by police were of moderately enriched uranium, suitable only for use in nuclear reactors.

The latest seizure was in August, when 350 grams of low-grade plutonium and a small amount of a lithium isotope that is a key ingredient in some hydrogen bombs were found. Several people were arrested and are under investigation.

Authorities later said the smuggled material was not suitable or of insufficient quantity to make a bomb.

Knife-wielding man shot outside White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man who was seen running toward the White House brandishing a long knife, was shot yesterday by police in the third shooting incident around the executive mansion in two months.

This time, no shots were aimed toward the White House.

The incident occurred about 9 a.m. local time. President Clinton was in the Oval Office at the time. An aide said he was informed but that no changes were made in his schedule.

The man was taken to George Washington University Hospital, where he was in critical condition and was undergoing surgery, said hospital spokesman Rich James. The spokesman identified him as Marcelino Corniel, 33, a homeless man.

He was wounded once in the chest and once in the right leg, James said. "He was recognized by Secret Service people as someone who was [outside] the White House a lot," spending much of his time in Lafayette Park across Pennsylvania Avenue from the presidential mansion with the homeless people and protesters who live there year-round.

Others who live in the park described Corniel as a Los Angeles native who first showed up in the park two or three months ago.

Maj. Robert Hines of the US Park Police said the man was running across Pennsylvania Avenue when officers stopped him.

"There was a struggle," Hines said. "They told the man to drop his knife two or three times. The man did not drop his knife, so he shot him."

A videotape of the incident shows three uniformed officers pointing guns at the man, who is standing with his arms outstretched to the ground. As his head turns toward one of the officers, two shots ring out and the man falls to the ground, clutching his breast.

"He refused to drop the knife. He was close enough that the officer felt threatened," said Hines.

Hines said the two shots were fired by park police.

"We don't know what started it," he said. "All we know is that our officers tried to stop him as he got to the edge of the White House sidewalk." "We were trying to maintain [restrain] this man, not letting him toward the White House," Hines said.

Todd Ouellette, who regularly demonstrates outside the White House on behalf of soldiers missing in action from the Vietnam War, said he saw a man in a brown jacket "pointing his arm towards the security man and the security guard was not looking to get any closer to the man."

Ouellette said that after a small scuffle, the man "started chasing the security guard." "They told him to put down whatever he had in his hands apparently and he didn't and two shots were fired," said Ouellette, who has been living in Lafayette Park across from the White House.

One of the man's friends, Walter Gregory Jackson, said "he left due to police harassment" about a month ago, then returned two weeks later.

The incident occurred as police were still investigating a shooting before dawn Saturday, in which at least four bullets were fired at the South Side of the White House from the Ellipse. Police theorize it might have been a drive-by shooting.

The first shooting was on October 29 when a man walking on Pennsylvania Avenue peppered the north side of the White House with 29 rounds fired from a semi-automatic weapon. Two tourists wrestled the man to the ground. Some of the bullets lodged in the walls of the White House and one shattered a window in the press room.

Carter brokers Bosnia cease-fire

SARAJEVO (AP) — Bosnia's president said yesterday he would agree to an immediate, four-month nationwide cease-fire, which Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said could begin as early as Friday.

Former President Jimmy Carter helped mediate the cease-fire in two days of shuttling back and forth between the headquarters of the Moslem-led government in Sarajevo and the rebel Serbs' stronghold in Pale, 15 kilometers down the road.

"We don't want another Cyprus or another Korea, so we've tried to get the parties to agree on a cease-fire for the cessation of hostilities and we've negotiated with the Bosnian Serbs to get four months," Carter told Associated Press Television yesterday.

Carter mentioned a possible hitch, however, saying the Serbs wanted a signed agreement by January 1 with the Bosnian government on a permanent end to fighting. Though he did not say so, it appeared the Serbs would resume fighting if no agreement beyond a temporary cease-fire was reached by then.

The Bosnian government has opposed a permanent truce nationwide because it would freeze military gains by the Serbs, who have captured 70 percent of Bosnia since the war broke out in April 1992. An estimated 200,000 people are dead or missing in the conflict.

The temporary cease-fire appeared in limbo earlier yesterday when Karadzic told the Cable

News Network that the Serbs would not stop fighting until they had an agreement on a permanent cease-fire.

Carter said that besides the four-month cease-fire, the new agreement also committed the Serbs to a return to peace talks, deployment of UN peacekeepers between combatants, and exchange of prisoners. Copies of the agreement were not distributed to the press.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic said he would rekindle aborted peace talks with Bosnian Serbs if they accepted "the Contact Group plan as a starting point."

That plan, devised by diplomats from Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States, would give Bosnia's Moslems and Croats 51 percent of the republic and cut Serb lands by one-third from what they now hold to 49 percent.

"We told President Carter, 'Please don't destroy this plan,'" Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic told reporters today.

The Moslem-led government and Bosnian Croats have both agreed to the plan, but the Serbs have not, objecting to the plan's proposed maps and refusing to give up on their demands of confederation with their patron, Serbia.

In an attempt to lure Serbs back to the peace talks, the Contact Group this month abandoned its opposition to union with Serbia and said the territorial divisions could be "adjusted by mutual arrangement."

BBC World Channel to be broadcast on US cable

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The British Broadcasting Corporation said yesterday it was launching a 24-hour international information and news service, BBC World Channel, on US cable television.

The service, which will start on February 1, 1995, will provide American viewers with a 24-hour service that will include hourly bulletins of international news, business, sports and weather. It will also include a range of BBC documentary and news programming tailored for the US market.

The BBC move will be a joint venture between BBC and the New York-based International News Network.

Launched in October 1991, BBC World is scheduled to start up in New Zealand in February and in Europe a short time later. "Bringing BBC World to the United States has always been a major element in our planned global roll-out of this important service," said John Thomas, managing director of BBC Worldwide Television. "We have been talking with INN about this move for over a year and changes in US cable regulations make this the opportune time," he said in a statement.

In the United States, BBC World will include about one hour of programming developed with a specific American viewpoint. That is expected to increase to about six hours a day by the end of 1995.

BBC World will carry advertising in the United States.

First-day copy of US Declaration of Independence going on sale

NEVER mind that it will be too late for a Christmas stocking: The New York Historical Society's original copy of the Declaration of Independence could end up in some multimillionaire's private collection.

The society's controversial sale of valuable works from its collections is about to begin, in an effort to raise the \$20 million it needs to survive.

The first three sales — of 183 European old master paintings, paperweights and ephemera — began at Sotheby's January 12, under the supervision of the New York State attorney general. The decision has been made to sell the declaration, but it's being postponed for later, partly to give the society time to find a buyer at another institution, said David

Redden, a Sotheby's official.

However, "it's an American icon," said Larry Sullivan, now chief of rare books at the Library of Congress, and the society's former librarian. "A lot of private collectors around probably would love to have a declaration. They're the ones who have the million or so to buy it."

The society's copy was printed on July 4, 1776, the day the Continental Congress voted for independence and authorized John Dunlap to print it in Philadelphia. There are 24 known Dunlap copies.

The society will keep a copy that was printed in New York, which is rarer — it's the only one — but since it's not the original it would bring less money, Sullivan said.

Newsday

Jesse Jackson's TV message on race to clash with queen's broadcast

LONDON (AP) — Plans by TV's Channel 4 to broadcast a Christmas Day attack by Jesse Jackson on British racism while the queen addresses the nation on BBC and ITV have annoyed some legislators.

The pre-recorded message by the American civil rights activist on Channel 4 and Queen Elizabeth II's pre-recorded Christmas Day message on BBC television and Independent Television will both begin at 3 p.m., vying for viewers in the ratings.

The *Times of London* on Monday quoted the Rev. Jackson as saying he did not intend to undermine the impact of the queen's annual message of Christmas good wishes and hopes for the future.

It quoted him as saying he was unaware the programs, both lasting about 10 minutes, would clash when he recorded his.

The queen's message broadcast by the BBC and ITV to the nation at 3 p.m. has become over the years part of the nation's Christmas Day ritual.

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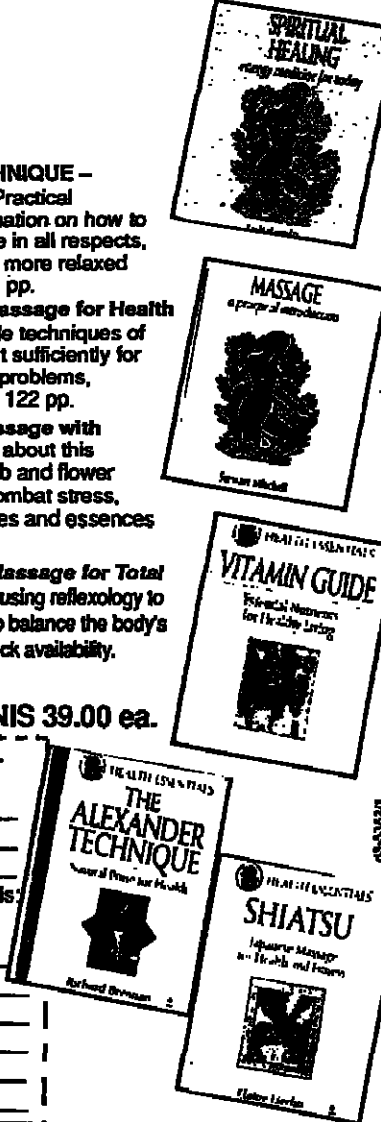
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مكتبة النخيل

Iranian-Arab rift splits Hizbullah

Moslem summit 'saves face'

NEWS ANALYSIS

ELAINE GANLEY

ALTHOUGH the world's Moslem leaders were able to patch over differences and issue a public statement against Islamic extremism, divisions between them are as apparent as ever.

The 52-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference summit met last week in Casablanca with leaders from the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

"The summit once again saved face," said Antoine Sfeir, publisher of the Paris-based *Les Cahiers d'Orient* review on Arabs and Islam. "In fact, the breakages and divisions remain the same."

The leaders broke new ground on one of the trickiest issues - confronting the problem of Islamic extremism, which has been rolling like a wave across the Islamic map.

It was a display of deft diplomacy that defied reality.

Nations such as Morocco and Saudi Arabia joined Sudan and Iran - both accused of fomenting extremism - in a final declaration calling for an "illuminated Islam exempt of extremism or fanaticism." The document condemned state-sponsored terrorism.

FROM NORTH Africa to Malaysia and the Philippines, Moslem militants are making inroads or fighting armed battles to topple their governments.

In Algeria, more than 11,000 people have been killed in an Islamic insurgency. Militants are active in Egypt, Jordan and Oman. Even in tightly controlled Saudi Arabia, seat of Islam's holiest site, Mecca, extremists are stirring.

Summit host King Hassan of Morocco turned the usual thesis of "Western plots" on its head, blaming extremism for "fierce campaigns against Islam."

Sudan's leader, Gen. Omar al-Bachir, and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, who headed his delegation, denied any connections with militant groups or terrorism.

Irony was the order of the day and tact was the tenet for the uncommon banding together.

But a resolution - co-sponsored by Iran - condemned "international terrorism" yet failed to mention Islamic extremism. Tehran was chosen for the next summit in three years.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak blamed Moslems "blinded by ignorance and greed" for "wasting a chance in drawing the world map."

Sfeir noted the caricature often used to portray Islamic militants - a portrait of Moslem leaders, their arms clasped behind each other in apparent friendship, accompanied by a portrait taken from behind showing daggers in each others' backs.

The Paris-based AP writer covers France, North Africa and fundamentalist movements.

Saudi Arabian economy comes down to earth

PETER MILLERSHIP

RIYADH

SAUDI Arabia, used to fabulous wealth, faces lean times because of Gulf war debts and a period of weak oil prices.

Analysts are now urging significant structural changes to its economy. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report last year spotlighted the kingdom's deficit problems and Western media gave prominence to the troubles of its economy. Since then the kingdom has cut spending by 20 percent.

"We were living on 20 percent fat," Abdul Rahman al-Zamil, deputy commerce minister, said. Saudi Arabia in the last two decades spent about \$1 trillion on industrial, farm, health, education and building projects as the discovery of oil transformed it from medieval poverty to an industrialized state with fabulous wealth.

It can now see the bottom of its coffers and is examining ways of prospering under more normal circumstances through borrowing programs, scaling down its welfare system and the disposal or "privatization" of loss-making state industries.

Economists spoke of "new re-



ARAB NEWS DIGEST

AFTER weeks of blazing tension within the ranks, the Hizbullah Party's differences burst into the open this week.

Signs of a split emerged when Hizbullah sheikhs in the Bekaa vehemently attacked Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the party secretary-general.

The attack came in a violent denunciation which observers considered a "declaration of war" on the current leadership

from an influential group within the party.

Hizbullah's differences are centered on four issues:

- A pledge by the leaders, led by Nasrallah, of total loyalty to Iran's spiritual leader Ali Khamenei and their acceptance of him as the "guardian of Moslems" and "the authority for Shi'ites."

(Prominent Shi'ite leaders in Lebanon - such as sheikhs Mohammed Fadlallah and Mohammed Mahdi Shams a-Din - consider Khamenei a political official. Their allegiance is to Ayatollah Ali Mohammed Sistani in the Iraqi Shi'ite holy city of Najaf. Other leading figures, such as Sheikh Hussein al-Musawi, favor Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri in the Iranian holy city, Qom.)

- Two groups within Hizbullah,

among them the Bekaa sheikhs, strongly oppose the party's involvement in Lebanon's political process, most particularly in the recent elections.

• The leadership has doggedly refused to publish the party's financial records. Conflicting groups in Hizbullah allege that leaders are spending huge sums of Iranian money on promoting Iran's political and religious interests rather than on helping the party.

• The party's 22-member central committee has not met since March 1992. The leaders have replaced committee meetings with their own regular meetings with officials of the Iranian embassies in Beirut and Damascus.

A copy of the statement issued by the Hizbullah Bekaa sheikhs attacking Nasrallah was obtained

by Al-Sharq al-Awsat's Beirut bureau.

It criticized "the party's participation in the recent parliamentary election and Nasrallah's attempts to exploit religion for the sake of politics, pawing Shi'ite rules and principles with foreign elements and a foreign authority that has nothing to do with Arabism."

In a more specific reference to Iran and the handing of Shi'ite authority to Ayatollah Khamenei, the statement said: "Allowing that Iranian authority to be in control even of our religious rites and spiritual leadership is a serious and sinister development."

"Has Hizbullah's well dried up?" it asked. "Have its senior clerics disappeared so that you rush to impose foreign leaders on the party?"

The statement cited Sheikh Fadlallah's position:

"He has tried to explain that the issue is religion, which is what gives us our power and dignity. He spares no effort to spread the light of guidance, to revive Islam, to rehabilitate Arab spiritual and religious leaders."

"Why are you working to silence him and both secretly and publicly to put obstacles in the way of his mission?"

The statement added that Fadlallah is worthy of becoming the main authority for the Shi'ites.

It accused Nasrallah of exploiting the party's budget and funds to support establishments which belong to him personally.

It said he "is abandoning Imam al-Sadr's line, the living formula in which he believed and for whose sake he made sacrifices." The statement said Nasrallah

"prefers to look for political performance from a government [Iran] whose position proceeds from a sectarian mentality and which is characterized by political backwardness."

In a question to Nasrallah, it asks: "What have you done about the prisoners in Israeli jails, first and foremost Sheikh Abdel Karim Obeid and Haj Mustafa al-Dirani?"

The statement urged him to "stop spreading the poison of disunity among the sons of one people and one faith."

Iranian sources in Teheran said the government was sending a special envoy to Beirut to persuade the conflicting factions in Hizbullah to settle their differences as soon as possible.

(Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Lebanon, December 10)



Some of those taking part in an Arab youth and student conference in Baghdad demonstrate outside the United Nations office there calling for an end to sanctions against Iraq. (AP)

Sudan's hardships continue to multiply

KHARTOUM (AP) - As Sudan tries to get back in the good graces of Western agencies that lend millions to the Third World, everyday hardships are multiplying for the Sudanese people, even with their morning cup of tea.

Kaaba shedid - "very tough" - is how many Sudanese answer when asked about life these days.

Life has never been easy in Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries. But now the government has removed subsidies on basic goods like gasoline, flour and medicines, while instituting a wage freeze.

It's part of an effort to satisfy International Monetary Fund demands for economic reform. Sudan has been cut off from IMF loans since 1984 for defaulting on debt payments, but earlier this year it was at risk of becoming the first country expelled from the main lending institution to Third World countries.

In November, IMF officials visited Khartoum and reportedly

praised the latest moves.

Still, it's hard to find a good word for the government in Khartoum's downtown market.

"How am I supposed to afford to buy a kilogram of meat when it costs 1,000 pounds (\$2.50) and my salary is less than 25,000 pounds (\$64)? We just do without meat," said a young teacher.

Like most Sudanese, when discussing anything to do with the government, she refused to give her name.

But the hardships have gotten bad enough that even the state-run media are starting to talk about them, albeit minus complainants' names.

Sudanese, known for their cheerful nature, seem to survive these trials by channeling their frustrations into humor.

The newspapers' special target is skyrocketing medicine prices, and all Khartoum read about a widow forced to sell her robe - a traditional dress - to buy 5,000 pounds (\$12) of medicine for her daughter. The girl died.

Bahrain riots underscore regional trouble as Gulf states meet

MANAMA

News agencies

AS leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council gathered for their annual summit this week, riots in the host country, Bahrain, gave a glimpse of the tensions seething under the well-heeled opulence of the oil-rich Gulf.

The GCC is still smarting from its total failure to stop Saddam Hussein's invasion of member state Kuwait four years ago, until the grand coalition led by the US bailed it out.

This year, the council is still seeking to develop a defense structure and to grapple with border disputes that are troubling the six-country alliance.

The three-day meeting came against a backdrop of nearly two weeks of clashes in Bahrain between security forces and mainly Shi'ite Moslem agitators, underlining the Gulf states' need to settle their differences to tackle a new tide of Moslem fundamentalism.

Security troops and police were posted along the main roads leading to the hotel where the leaders of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain were meeting.

No trouble was reported amid the massive security surrounding the leaders, but police fired tear gas to disperse rioters who burned tires to block streets as the meeting gathered.

Border disputes between Qatar and both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain were figuring prominently in discussions during the three-day summit.

"The question of borders has become acute and could not be ignored," one delegate said.

The problems of GCC unity are so touchy the leaders were loath to air them in public except in circumlocutions. The real snarling was behind closed doors.

"In view of the sensitivity of the problem, the heads of state

prefer private, closed sessions confined only to themselves to tackle it," one delegate said.

Border problems have bedeviled the 13-year-old GCC for the past few years.

After the Gulf war, the GCC's newfound solidarity was again dented when a dormant dispute resurfaced between Bahrain and Qatar over a clutch of islands and reefs potentially rich in oil and gas.

Two years ago Qatar became embroiled in another frontier dispute, this time with Saudi Arabia, the senior GCC state.

Delegates said a settlement of the border disputes was crucial for plans to boost collective security.

Bahrain's Sheikh Isa, who was pressing strongly for collective security, expressed hope that

GCC achievements would be developed "to raise up to the level of repeated challenges still facing the security and stability of the region."

"Foremost of our aspired goals is to achieve domestic immunity for this entity [the GCC], eliminate causes of differences inside it and strengthen ties of solidarity among its members," he said.

The summit was to ratify a security pact already initiated by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE. Qatar boycotted a GCC interior ministers' meeting which worked out the pact in Riyadh last month, citing the border dispute as the reason for its absence.

Kuwait said its reservations on the pact arose from constitutional considerations.

The delegates said Kuwait

wanted a decision calling on Iraq to "comply with all United Nations resolutions" before economic sanctions imposed on Baghdad following its 1990 invasion of the emirate could be lifted.

GCC suspicion of Iran's armaments program and a dispute between the UAE and Teheran over three islands in the Gulf were also on the agenda.

On Bahrain's own problems, the Interior Ministry said street clashes over 12 days were organized as part of a plot to destabilize the emirate and that the Moslem preacher who allegedly masterminded the trouble will be put on trial.

It said a young police officer

was killed during the clashes and two others injured. Dissidents claim several protesters have been killed.

Bahraini dissidents in exile claim that hundreds of people have been arrested in clashes and police raids since the trouble broke out December 5 after Sheikh Ali Salman, a prominent Shi'ite religious figure, was arrested for inciting demonstrations against worsening unemployment.

The unrest was believed to be the most serious since 1981, when 50 to 60 people, mainly Bahraini Shi'ites, were arrested on charges of supporting an Iranian-backed plot to overthrow the government.

UN discovers Iraqi biological research

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - The UN is checking whether Iraq has developed an extensive biological-weapons research program after inspectors found previously undisclosed germ cultures there for cholera, tuberculosis and the plague, diplomatic sources said this week.

The find of 25 liters of "diagnostic media" for the three diseases by a team of UN weapons inspectors is the first discovery of materials in over two years that could be part of a banned weapons program.

Although the amount was relatively small, they said the discovery could indicate a wider Iraqi program into biological arms than previously thought.

An analysis was under way to determine their significance, after the bulk of the cultures had been

destroyed by the UN.

Without mentioning the discovery, Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN Special Commission in charge of ridding Iraq of dangerous weapons, said in a report this week that his main problem in compiling data for past programs was in the biological sphere.

"While Iraq maintains that the [biological] program was in the early research stages and would be defensively oriented, the indications all point to an offensive program," he said.

"In general, in relation to the past programs, Iraq has not volunteered information and has shown a marked lack of transparency, disclosing information only when confronted with evidence by the commission," his report said.

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DAVID BAR-ILLAN

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Back to square one

SILVIO Berlusconi's ineptitude in the world of politics, to which he is a newcomer, has inevitably led him to the impasse which is expected to force his resignation today as Italy's prime minister - after only seven months in office. It will be a great disappointment to voters, who had pinned their hopes so heavily on his proven managerial skills to rebuild their political system after the main parties of the past collapsed under the weight of their own corruption. Nonetheless, the worrying antics of Berlusconi leave no choice but for the people of Italy to choose again.

What the voters thought they were getting was a new government of new parties untainted by the scandals of the past, which would be dedicated to cleaning out the nation's Augean stables. What they got was more of the same old story - bickering politicians and an ever-expanding web of allegations and suspicion.

This latest collapse of Italy's 53rd government since 1945 comes only a year after Berlusconi entered politics for the first time at the head of a party named for an Italian football team. Since the election, the three-part coalition he formed has come to resemble a rabble on the terraces rather than an efficient team on the playing field. Berlusconi might have survived the internal bickering, had not Italy's relentless anti-graft prosecutors turned their attentions in his direction.

Though nothing has been proved of the allegations about his Fininvest conglomerate of

companies paying bribes to tax officials, Berlusconi has shown his political ineptitude at its worst in handling the affair. Still popular and with a large following, Berlusconi could actually have reaped political capital from the investigation by welcoming it, by promising open cooperation, and by commending the magistrates for going all the way to the top in the clean-out. Even if he had admitted how difficult it had been to do business without greasing some palms in the old days of ubiquitous graft, it would have been accepted by ordinary Italians, who were themselves snared in the net.

Many a competent politician would have been able to make lemonade from this lemon. Berlusconi instead chose to be the truculent tycoon who will not be crossed by underlings. Forgetting he was running a democracy rather than a business empire, he accused the magistrates of persecution and became embroiled in snarling spats with his coalition allies.

Nor has the prime minister shown much moderation in the run-up to the present crisis. He threatened earlier this week to call his supporters to the streets in "a great tide" if he is toppled by "palace plotters." The remarks have drawn well-deserved scorn in a democratic country. "What is it?" said one opposition leader. "A dress rehearsal for civil war?" It is quite possible Berlusconi could win another election, but one can only hope he will come to see politics as a learning process - and he still has much to learn.

End of term smiles

A comprehensive report issued today by the 25-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development brings good news for its 25 members - including the powerful Group of Seven - for most of the 1990s. The report, *Economic Outlook*, predicts steady and sustained growth with inflation under control and healthy economies all around. The only note of gloom, and potentially the most serious socially, is the report's prediction that unemployment will remain at unacceptably high levels until the end of the century.

The OECD analysts are uncharacteristically cheerful and optimistic about the end of the recession and the future of the major economies, suggesting the strong recovery also offers a "golden opportunity" to break the boom-bust cycle that has plagued the First World for most of the present century. "The challenge now facing policy-makers is to sustain the current revival of non-inflationary growth and of employment as effectively as possible," they said.

Economic Outlook says the growth rate of the member states will be 3 percent in 1995, up from 2.8 percent this year, and will continue to strengthen without faltering into 1996. It says Europe and Japan will pick up the slack in production as the US recovery flattens out.

On the crucial issue of jobs, the report says unemployment queues will shrink throughout its area as demand-driven economic output creates work - cutting average unemployment to 7.7 percent by the end of 1996 from 8.2 percent

this year. However, it rightly stresses that the issue of the jobless must be tackled imaginatively and not simply allowed to ride the economic waves.

The figures would be much improved but for rigid labor market policies in Europe - for which the European Union will continue to pay the price with double-digit unemployment rates. Urging reform of labor policies across the continent, the OECD predicts that in any case "unemployment will be unacceptably high in the year 2000."

The key figure in all such predictions is of course the United States, which first led the way out of the world recession and now, says the OECD, will be the first to peak in the recovery. Growth is expected to slow to 3.1 percent next year compared with 1994's 3.9. Despite official US assurances to the contrary, the OECD expects higher inflation for the next two years - with inevitable pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates even further to squeeze it out.

OECD reports are always eagerly awaited and have proved to be sure-footed in the past, so today's issue should raise smiles in the economics ministries of the organization's member states. Though the report is upbeat, the members would do well to heed the advice on an all-out effort to tackle the menace of unemployment. Even in a glowingly healthy economy, there is little comfort for the tens of millions across Europe who have no jobs to go to.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOMELESS IN ISRAEL

Sir, - I am writing to protest the condescending attitudes taken by Michal Yudelman in her article of December 13 and by the writers of the three prominent articles of December 9 on the homeless. The impression was that the homeless are becoming predominantly young and drunk in the Tel Aviv area and that the welfare system has to catch them and force them to abide in housing provided for them.

I spent over four months in Tel Aviv this past summer and I walked throughout the city quite often. I noticed fewer than 20 homeless in the city area, most of them older men and women with only a few apparent drinkers. Yes, there are hundreds of unemployed young Russians and some of them drink. But they do not live in the streets.

My friend Constantine was 50 years old and arrived here from Russia only four months before I met him in a park near the Yarkon in North Tel Aviv. All he could talk about was finding a place to live, off the street. I spent two months trying to help him find a place. I went to kibbutzim, moshavim, the Jewish Agency, the AACI, and it sent him to Kupat Holim and to the welfare office in Jaffa. I asked people in the street and in stores to help the man, and no one could point us to a shelter.

Did Constantine "fall through the cracks of the welfare systems"? We could not find the welfare system. Minister Ora Namir has some nerve wanting to force people to use a system with a zero profile. How about giving welfare information to the agencies which deal with people in need?

HENK BEN DAVID

Eilat

INCREDIBLE INSENSITIVITY

Sir, - On our way to Gamla recently with a group of American high-school students who are studying here for a year, we approached the Golan junction and came to a stop at the lights. Expecting to see the entrance to the Golan memorial site on our left, we were shocked to see a McDonald's fast-food restaurant with a huge sign in English on the restaurant itself, another in an area being created for parking - on the site of what was once parking for the Golan memorial site - and still another further east.

On top of the restaurant sat a huge multicolored plastic Ronald McDonald and to the left of the building sat a large jungle gym for children to climb on. All of the above totally blocked any view of the memorial site itself, the grove of trees, and the hill it sits on.

In retrospect, the shock was not just seeing that the site where hundreds of bereaved families and thousands of Israelis go to be consoled, comforted or inspired is being cov-

ered with the mindless culture of junk food: the big plastic signs, the cartoon characters, the jingles and the advertising come-ons, but rather the shock was realizing that we are somehow letting this happen to ourselves.

Someone or perhaps several someone approved this "project." Whatever the answer is, nothing can excuse the incredible insensitivity of this act, in relation to both the dead and the living.

The minimum that can be asked is that the ridiculous plastic doll and other huge obstructions be taken down. The right thing to do would be to move the restaurant altogether.

REUVEN GENN, Instructor

DAVID COHEN, Madrich

RHISA TEMAN, Guidance

Counselor

Pardess Hanna American

High School Program

Pardess Hanna.

CRUEL TO THE KIND

Sir, - It seems to me that a very important law of justice has been abused in our country, namely the law which states that, if you are kind to the cruel, you are cruel to the kind. In other words, if you are merciful to the criminal and you let him go without holding him accountable, then you automatically punish the innocent whom the criminal will inevitably harm.

The abuse of this law of justice is seen in many areas of our nation's daily activities. For example:

Releasing convicted murderers or those who attempted murder (as a

goodwill gesture);

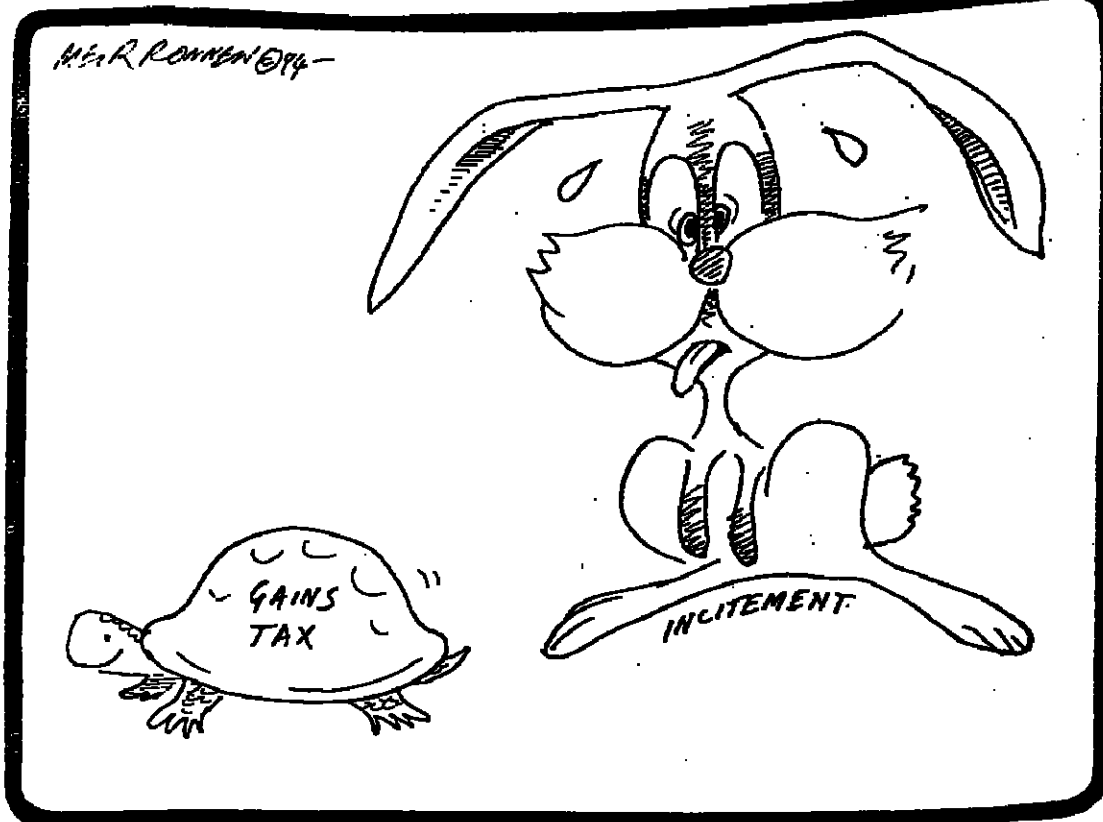
Allowing Palestinian workers to come into our cities because it is so inhuman to deprive them of work;

Rewarding terrorists with money, weapons, recognition and power, as well as the Peace Prize (because "they are our only hope for peace");

We, the Jewish people, the humane, kind Jewish people, have been selling our blood too cheaply too long.

ELON FELDMAN

Otniel.



Votes instead of talks

MOSHE ZAK

AS is its custom every Christmas, the UN again decorated the fir tree in its glass palace in New York with baskets of anti-Israel resolutions.

Israelis have grown used to this annual ritual, and the media don't get very excited about it.

And our public wouldn't have paid much attention this year either to a resolution demanding an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, had the Syrians not scolded the US for voting against the resolution, which claimed that "the annexation of the Golan Heights is null and void." Syria went as far as to lodge a formal protest in Washington.

This protest added a bit of spice to the tasteless UN performance, which included a condemnation of Israel for being on the Golan at all.

Syria has already learned that resolutions like these in the General Assembly can't move Israel off the Golan. But it is stacking them up for bargaining with the US in an eventual Israeli-Syrian settlement, as proofs that Israel's withdrawal from the Golan isn't a matter for negotiation but obligatory under UN resolutions.

American endorsement of this year's resolution would have added additional impetus to the UN demand for withdrawal.

But the US, a sponsor of the peace process, cannot be party to any resolution which establishes a priori what the final result of the process must be.

It was the Americans voting with Israel against the measure that irritated the Syrians, not the small number of delegates that

supported the resolution, nor the many abstentions. The absence of US support meant that the resolution was simply a monotonous repetition of its predecessors.

The vote in the General Assembly should afford Israel little consolation as far as the UN is concerned. The peace process may have improved our relations with some countries, but at the

The UN is hampering the peace process once again

UN our situation after the Oslo Agreement is no better than before.

Last year, 83 countries abstained on the resolution that "annexation of the Golan Heights by the Knesset is a gross violation of a Security Council resolution, and therefore illegal." This time, only 70 abstained.

NONETHELESS, this arithmetic is no real measure of Israel's standing. General Assembly resolutions aren't that significant. For example, the votes against the Camp David Agreement and the peace treaty with Egypt did nothing to detract from their importance.

Nor should we exaggerate the importance of last week's resolution welcoming Israel's agreements with Jordan and the PLO. It is convenient for Israel to be part of the majority endorsing

these agreements, and to see Syria and Egypt as being in splendid isolation with Iran and Libya for voting against them.

Still, we cannot ignore the fact that, to date, the UN has not amended the resolution expressing its reservations over the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement. Its negative attitude vis-à-vis the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state is a shameful stain on the international body, and a warning to anyone who is ready today to base Israel's security east of the Sea of Galilee on a UN force.

Last week, the UN resolved to authorize its secretariat to disseminate propaganda supplied by the PLO, which hasn't yet annulled the clauses in its covenant calling for Israel's annihilation.

And this international organization, which insists on maintaining a mission in Jerusalem, last week passed a resolution calling on countries with embassies in any part of Jerusalem to remove them immediately. In favor were 138 countries. Only Israel and Costa Rica voted against. Seven, including the US, abstained.

Clearly, this resolution cannot change Israel's stand on a unified Jerusalem as its capital. But such a vote could influence countries planning to transfer their embassies to Jerusalem.

Surely the UN's war against Israel's status in Jerusalem should make one wary about about its excessive involvement in Israeli-Arab affairs.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.

Peace as an aid to recovery

SHIMON TAMIR

HISTORY will record the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Israel and Jordan as a milestone on the road to comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors.

Like Anwar Sadat before him, Hussein understood that the path to the economic rehabilitation of his country led along the Jerusalem-Washington highway.

The Gulf War and UN sanctions against Aqaba port paralyzed Jordan's economy and trade. With unemployment at 20-25 percent, the ending of inter-Arab assistance and the expulsion of Jordanian citizens working in the Arab oil countries, the loss to Jordan was between \$3.5b. and \$4.5b. a year. And the flight of foreign currency in mid-1994, estimated at \$250m., badly hurt the financing of imports of basic staples.

Jordan needed a mechanism to stop the economic deterioration.

This is what the country's socioeconomic distress looks like: ● Jordan has one of the highest birthrates in the world, averaging 3.6-3.8 percent annually. This swallows up the country's entire economic growth.

In an economy which lacks sufficient resources, 42 percent of the population are under age 15. The International Labor Organization estimates that Jordan's population will double in less than a generation.

According to Jordanian author Dr. Isshak al-Kuttab, his country's population will hit 12.5m. by 2050. Jordan cannot sustain a population of that size, either physically or economically.

● Unemployment totals 160,000 out of a work force of between 850,000 and 900,000. A high proportion of the unemployed are academics, which is a threat to King Hussein's regime.

● A severe lack of water resources affects both the population and the economy. The 1993 deficit has been estimated at

333m. cubic meters of the needed total of 1.316b. cubic meters. The greatest problem is the supply of domestic drinking water. In 2005, the annual requirement will reach 1.6b. cubic meters, way beyond current resources.

A 1993 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization estimated average per-capita consumption in the year 2000 at 200 liters, compared with 1,000 liters in more self-sufficient countries.

The solution is to find new sources of water and build 10 dams throughout the country, which would stave off the anticipated shortage. The peace treaty guarantees this.

● About 40 percent of the central bank's reserves are in foreign currency, and large amounts are estimated to have left the country.

PRIOR TO the Gulf War, Aqaba port was the country's chief economic lifeline, handling 60 percent of Jordan's exports and 40 percent of its imports. The naval blockade imposed by the UN in its campaign against Iraq's Sad-

dain Hussein cost Jordan \$1.5b. and badly hurt its diminished treasury.

The direct loss from the blockade was in Iraq-related trade, estimated at \$400m. a year (or 35 percent of exports), while 90 percent of Jordan's oil imports had come from Iraq.

The most pressing problem of all is Jordan's continuing inability to repay its foreign debt - estimated at \$8.2b. by the Jordanian Finance Ministry.

Canceling this debt and relinking Jordan's economy to world markets, especially the US and the European Union, with help from GATT, could convert Jordan into one of the most prosperous countries in the Middle East, if the peace process penetrates economic and trade circles there.

A list of economic priorities, drawn up in cooperation with Israeli business leaders and economists, would be the best guarantee for Jordan's recovery.

A resuscitated Jordanian economy could become a showcase for Arab and other investors, whose integration in it would be the key to its stability.

And a stable economy would attract other countries in the region, as projected in the Casablanca Conference and its multifaceted programs for the new Middle East.

The writer is an economist and Middle East affairs scholar.

POSTSCRIPT

AN ELDERLY Russian villager lost nearly all her savings when rats ate the cash she had hoarded in her basement.

The woman, living in a village 130 km east of Moscow, earns her living by making illegal liquor, and had saved 1 million rubles (\$300).

"Having studied a variety of

Russian state and commercial banks, the lady concluded that the safest place was her cellar," a paper said.

Many Russians prefer to keep their savings at home, since Russian banks offer interest rates lower than the high inflation rate and deposits are not considered safe.

Space wars

AMY E. SCHWARTZ

THE newcomer to electronic space, like the televiewer to a crowded cocktail party, has to sort out the messages and mores of the place by tuning for clues.

The first oddity of the Net is the amount of time and emotional energy nearly every e-mail list seems to spend trying not to let the discussion explode into a full-fledged barroom brawl.

Of four different lists I've peeked into - a computer-assisted reporting list, a First Amendment issues list, a list for students of film and television and a list for philosophy and literature - all seem to spend between a quarter and a third of their time arguing over how to deal with "flames," bomb-throwers and instances of violent disagreement.

The lesson is that Americans are far more protected from real disagreement than you would think from the tumult of the airwaves.

The problem seems to hold equally for big issues and small annoyances. One of these sophisticated virtual crowds, spent a chunk of time recently in vicious argument over whether a member had erred in posting the e-mail address for Santa Claus.

Another virtual community became distraught when an announcement of an upcoming feminist theory conference elicited the crude addendum: "I hate all you bull dyke feminazis."

Is it so difficult to disagree in civility?

A number of practitioners of public speech - politicians, some journalists, defense lawyers, talk-

Internet users are finding it hard to disagree civilly

show hosts - get used to being verbally attacked.

But the experience of being disagreed with directly and publicly is really quite unpleasant. The beginner must learn to discard all kinds of adrenaline reactions, struggling to remember that they are different from physical agony.

You can watch this happening before your eyes on the Net, where ordinarily sealed social subcultures like journalism and academia, or feminists and anti-feminists, bump into each other on seemingly neutral discussion lists. (On political discussion lists, at least, people go in expecting a fight.)

EVERYONE who goes on-line has observed the wild effects that "flaming" seems to have on otherwise ordinary personalities. They go mad, spewing bile across cyberspace as if there weren't real people involved, then reacting with hurt astonishment when someone does the same in return.

The hurt party on-line can often be seen visibly going to pieces, either flaming back wildly, demanding the offender be thrown off-list or fleeing to adopt some form of the Catharine MacKinnon position that words inflict actual, punishable damage.

There's even a burgeoning concept of "virtual rape," first elaborated in a long *Village Voice* article last year about a nasty incident in a shared fantasy game.

Many thought that a disembodied forum like Internet would be a wonderful tool by which people could learn the truth of the old bromide about sticks, stones and words. That may, in the end, be the lesson the Internet teaches. But if it does, it will teach it the hard way, by letting participants exhaust themselves and find that nothing but civility really works.

Here and there on the lists that have suffered through four or five meta-flame-wars you begin to see firewalls, like the increasingly common signoff, "Flames to me privately, please." I "clipped" a copy of the exchange in which the scrawler about "feminazis" subsided into normal discussion after a virtual-adult type asked him to explain his argument further.

Maybe, if the network doesn't melt under the emotional strain, the amazed anguish of Internet surfers will yield to a general understanding that people with differing views are not just an abstract possibility guaranteed by the Constitution, but an actual condition with which one must reckon.

(The Washington Post)

Masada ramp thesis is still as firm as bedrock

How much of the Roman ramp at Masada was man-made? Archeologist Ehud Netzer responds to a reader's query based on a geologist's doubts

WHEN I was one of the medical officers at the Masada dig in 1964-65, we used to walk up the ramp on the west side to the plateau overlooking the Dead Sea each morning at daybreak. Since the ramp was completed in 73 CE, no one has seriously questioned the proposition that it was constructed during the occupation by the Roman 10th Legion.

But recently, geologist Dan Gill wrote in the British monthly *Nature*: "Contrary to prevailing opinion that the Roman assault ramp at Masada... was entirely man-made, geological observations reveal that it consists mostly of natural bedrock."

According to Josephus, the crucial battle with the Judean pariahs had been deferred pending construction of this ramp and of the raising of a siege tower to the level of the casement wall surrounding the plateau. The Romans evidently laid siege to Masada two years before the final assault.

Doesn't Gill's claim throw the whole of Josephus's account into question? For example, what about the skeletal remains? Some 970 corpses in the arid wilderness would leave bones, wouldn't they? [A pile of 25 skeletons, probably of Zealots and their families, were found at the site.]

It is odd that Josephus happened to be on the spot and described how both sides were true to their irreconcilable faiths. Then why would he have made up that story about the ramp, if all the rest was true? It does rather suggest that we are free to believe what we like about Masada.

I would like to believe that the parties to that encounter developed a grudging respect for one another and had the wherewithal to sort it out imaginatively. Then Masada would be emblematic not only of Jewish grit, but of guile. MICHAEL ROSE, Australia

Hebrew University archeologist Prof. Ehud Netzer responds:

The point of departure of Rose's reflections is the article by the geologist Dan Gill, which appeared in *Nature*. As someone fully acquainted with Masada, I take the liberty of raising certain objections to Gill's main premises.

No one has claimed that the entire ramp was man-made. After all, it was not built on level ground, but was adjoined to the mountain's cliffs and slopes.

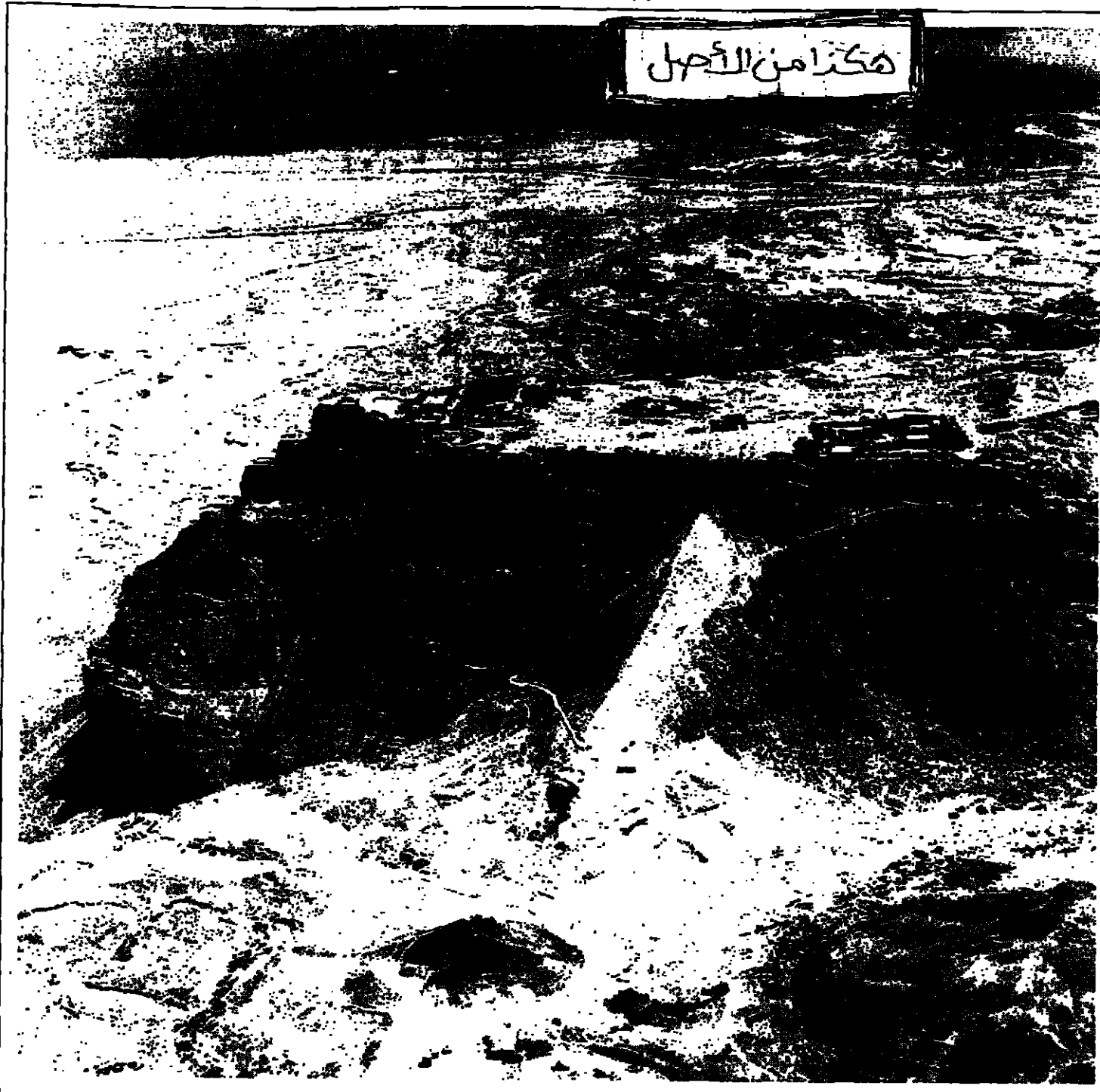
It is also clear that the engineers of the Roman army, in seeking to erect the siege ramp under particularly difficult circumstances, chose the place where it would be easiest.

In making their choice, they apparently sought a point where the difference in elevations was minimal, and where the topography allowed them to achieve their goal with minimal dumping of earth and stones.

Gill's thesis relates to the second of these criteria, and we do not disagree with him in principle. He claims that the rock projecting from the mountain here was so massive that it was necessary to dump only a small amount of earth. Thus, he says, one can't really speak of the ramp's "construction."

We disagree on this last point, first because the rock's natural form is irregular, whereas the ramp has a clearly defined pyramidal shape. This shape is a function of the course along its central axis, on which the siege ram was moved forward once the ramp was built. A very broad base was needed to create the "pyramid," and this called for dumping large quantities of earth on both sides of the course, particularly because of the mountainous topography.

Second, because of erosion, the ramp is smaller today than when it was built. Many hundreds, if not thousands, of cubic



Because of erosion, the Roman ramp is smaller today than when it was built, according to archeologist Ehud Netzer. (R. Nowitz)

meters of earth have been eroded during the 1,930 years since its construction.

Third, neither Gill nor anyone else has yet drilled test holes in the ramp, and therefore his thesis remains merely an assumption. It is thus possible that the bedrock is smaller than Gill imagines it to be.

The quantity of earth dumped to build the ramp is reckoned at several tens of thousands of cubic meters. Even if, for example, 26,000 and not 36,000 cubic meters of fill were dumped, this operation would still be considered amazing.

Keep in mind the desert conditions and constant harassment

from above by the besieged, apparently throughout the ramp's construction.

SINCE ROSE volunteered at Masada 30 years ago, particularly in the last decade, the material from Masada has been studied thoroughly, and the story of the siege as related by Josephus has

largely been verified by an analysis of the archaeological data.

These data indicate that the struggle between the Zealots and the Romans was a stubborn one, and the Zealots did all they could to prevent the Romans from reaching the summit.

From an analysis of the excavations, it became evident that the

ceilings of almost all the buildings on Masada were dismantled by the Zealots to provide them with timber for the erection of the wooden wall mentioned by Josephus. It was built in such a way that the siege ram could not penetrate it; this, in our opinion, obliged the Romans to further heighten the ramp by dumping more earth.

The excavations revealed clear signs of the Zealots' burning of their families' personal property and the burning of those rooms whose ceilings had not been dismantled - mainly in the Western Palace, Northern Palace and storeroom complex - as described by Josephus.

The 11 lots revealed in the storeroom area together with about 300 other ostraca (ink inscriptions on ceramic fragments) could have belonged to the Zealots' archives.

Most of the other ostraca bore letters in various combinations and possibly served for the drawing of the first lots, in which the last 10 men to commit suicide were chosen.

The siege camps, the circumvallation (the siege wall the Romans built around the fortress), the form of destruction of the structures on the mountain and the buildings serve as definite proofs of the essential veracity of Josephus's account.

Even from a historical viewpoint, the Romans had every reason to prevent those Zealots who had fortified themselves on Masada from absconding, since the latter could have rekindled the flames of revolt in settlements that had already surrendered to the Romans.

THE ONLY question still open to discussion, until further archaeological data come to light, is whether a mass suicide did occur there. This topic has inspired many papers and discussions in recent years.

If such a mass suicide did indeed take place - and I tend to accept Josephus's account - the corpses were either cremated or buried in a common grave (most of the open areas on the summit have not yet been exposed), or they were cast on the steep slopes of the mountain where they were devoured by birds and beasts of prey, not necessarily leaving any traces after so many years.

There are Chinese homosexuals - they're just still in the closet

READERS in Hong Kong, but not in China, will next month be able to buy the first book reporting on the secret world of Chinese homosexual men, most of whom marry women and hide their sexual preferences.

Fang Gang, 27, a newspaper editor in the northern port city of Tianjin, said he wrote the book because he wanted to examine a topic that is still taboo in China, and to help an ignorant public understand neighbors who might be closet homosexuals.

"Scholars and experts I spoke to estimate that between 1 and 5 percent of Chinese are homosexual," Fang said. "If we take the medium figure, that means 30 million, equal to the population of several European countries. Yet we know nothing about them."

But how to find out about people who hide their sexuality? Fang started at the psychology

clinic of a sympathetic Tianjin doctor who has homosexuals as patients, many of them asking for help to cure what they consider an illness and an abnormality, or to overcome their inability to make love to their wives.

"I discovered that the homosexuals, once they trusted me and felt I was not against them, were delighted to talk. They had much to say but no one to say it to," he said. "Of course, I had to promise not to reveal their names or work units."

These first introductions led to others, enabling Fang to meet dozens of homosexuals as well as doctors and experts.

"Most felt their homosexuality was abnormal and wrong and wanted to change it but couldn't. They cannot tell families, colleagues or even wives for fear of the consequences," he said.

Because of intense social and family pressure, most are married and have a child, even

Experts say that up to 5 percent of all Chinese are homosexuals, according to a book that looks at the taboo topic in the world's most populated country, Mark O'Neill writes

though that means deceiving their wives as to their sexuality.

"One told me he initiates sex with his wife once every two or three months. For him it is not a happy experience. His wife is satisfied with this. She thinks a more sexually active husband might have affairs on the side," Fang said.

The Chinese are not subjected to the sexual bombardment from advertising and the media that in the West puts pressure on many to believe they must have more frequent and more elaborate sex. Fang said Chinese homosex-

uals keep their sexuality a secret from their wives for fear the women will demand divorces, thus possibly unweaving the husbands' sexual differences. They therefore satisfy their needs with friends in private.

In China there are no public facilities such as restaurants or bars where homosexuals can meet since these would attract too much attention, he said. They can find partners only in places such as public toilets in relatively deserted places.

Fang recalls meeting a 60-year-old teacher who had not found a

partner throughout his life.

THE CHINESE rarely discuss homosexuality. It is not taught at school or discussed at home. Most people regard it as abnormal, shameful and an illness to be cured.

Social and family pressure makes it unacceptable for two men to live together openly as homosexuals, although it is not illegal.

In ancient China, homosexuality was less of a taboo. The famous novel *Jin Ping Mei*, written during the Ming Dy-

nasty (1368-1644), describes male homosexuals among the rich and ruling elite who chose young boys as their slaves and companions. Fang said most Chinese nowadays are indifferent and ignorant about the subject, which was why he decided to write his book, of which a Hong Kong publisher plans to print 2,000 copies next month. Such books may not be legally sold in China.

He is searching for a publisher in China. "Most of those I have written to have not replied," he said. "Perhaps they feel the subject is too sensitive, or fear being criticized for publishing pornographic material."

He said his was the first book of reportage on the issue in China. A more scholarly work on homosexuality was published in 1992, also in Hong Kong, and 5,000 copies were printed in China, but few were sold. (Reuter)

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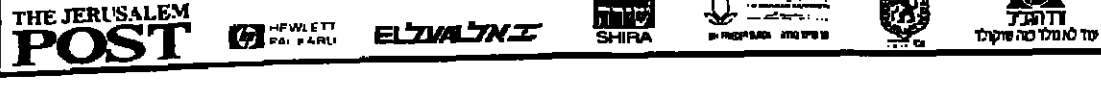


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Fogel: Cut rates now or face recession later

Outgoing Treasury director-general slams Bank of Israel for fueling inflation

IN a parting shot, outgoing Treasury director-general Aharon Fogel called on the Bank of Israel to cut back interest rates immediately by about 1.5 percent, warning that otherwise the economy is heading toward a recession.

Fogel, who is leaving the Treasury at the end of the month, sharply criticized the central bank for fueling inflation, at a farewell news conference yesterday.

He said that until September, when the central bank began raising interest rates by 1.5 percentage points at a time, the country's macroeconomic policy served growth and competitiveness.

However, the sharp interest rate changes have disturbed the delicate balance between interest and foreign exchange rates, which, if unchecked, "open the possibility of a significant recession," Fogel warned.

The high interest rates, which increase the demand for shekels in the currency market, have resulted in the revaluation of the shekel.

"An export-led economy cannot afford a revaluation of the shekel," he explained, since a more expensive shekel undermines the competitiveness of exports. Fogel noted that the damage of an overvalued shekel will not be felt immediately since the opening of new export markets is equivalent to a real devaluation.

"Until the last interest rate hike, there was no reason to change the exchange rate policy," said Fogel, hinting at the possibility that now a devaluation of the shekel could be justified.

However, Fogel rejected that possibility at the moment and said the fight against inflation can be put back on track if the Bank of Israel decreases interest rates, while the government reduces labor costs and pushes ahead with economic structural reforms.

Fogel said inflation took off

JOSE ROSENFELD

this year as a result of deeply ingrained distortions in the housing market, which limited the supply of available housing and contributed to skyrocketing prices.

He added that despite the government's efforts to increase the supply of housing, not enough was done to change planning regulations due to political constraints. "Undoubtedly, this is the reason we are only seeing moderation in prices rises and not lower prices," Fogel explained.

On top of housing, fruit and vegetable and health care prices also contributed to inflation. Fogel noted however, that improvements in the country's produce import policy have significantly speeded up the government's response time to shortages.

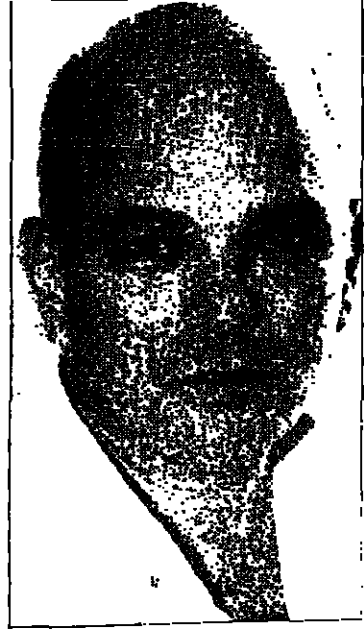
Fogel blamed the generous wage agreements on the breakdown of responsibility of the unions representing the workers. The consequences have been particularly damaging to the health care system, he said.

The impact of the wage hikes in the remaining areas of the public sector was translated into higher budget spending on salaries, which limited the tax cuts and improved services the government could offer.

By contrast, he indicated these wage hikes did not result in parallel salary increases in the business sector, since unlike the public sector, workers are compensated for their individual performance.

Notwithstanding these sources of inflation, Fogel blamed the Bank of Israel for pouring oil to the flames of inflation by failing to arrest the tremendous jump in the money supply last year.

According to him, the central bank should have imposed limits on credit to purchase stocks and bonds, which would have seriously



Fogel: Sharp interest rate changes have disturbed the delicate balance between interest and foreign exchange rates. (Boris Smartanko/Scoop 80)

Harish rejects trade deal with EU

INDUSTRY and Trade Minister Micha Harish yesterday rejected the agreement in principle reached between German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres over a new trade accord with the European Union.

"The package with the EU is not economically worthwhile, and I will oppose it in the cabinet," Harish said.

Sources close to Harish said he was fuming at Peres for expressing satisfaction at the agreement with the EU only two days after agreeing not to accept it.

JOSE ROSENFELD

Foreign Ministry economics department head Oded Eran said both Kinkel and Peres were trying to conclude negotiations as soon as possible, and Kinkel went to the EU's ministers council to get their approval for an agreement in principle.

After getting the go ahead, Kinkel sent a letter to Peres stating that the sides will try to resolve the remaining four outstanding issues in the coming weeks.

The issues include opening

government procurement, agricultural and processed food imports, raw textile imports and full membership status in the EU research and development organization.

Eran said he expected the negotiations to conclude within a month, since the sides are getting as close as can be expected.

Industry and Trade Ministry spokesman Avital Bar admitted that there was some progress, and the Europeans are leaning toward opening government pro-

urement in the telecommunications sector.

However, it was not significant enough, she said. She noted in particular that without full membership status in the research and development organization, "paying \$30 million a year without the right to vote would be like throwing away money."

"We are not a developing nation which has to be grateful in any price," Bar said. "The Europeans are also getting something out of this agreement, namely better access to the region's markets."

Kibbutzim expected to reach deal on debt repayment by year's end

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

KIBBUTZ Artzi and the United Kibbutz Movement expect to sign an agreement in principle on their debt repayment arrangement by the end of the year, Kibbutz Artzi secretary Amir Efrati said yesterday.

Efrati said representatives of the two largest kibbutz umbrella organizations are negotiating on a daily basis with the Finance Ministry in an attempt to speed up implementation of the kibbutz debt arrangement plan.

However, a number of issues related to the relationship between the kibbutzim and the Finance Ministry and the kibbutzim and the method of appraising kibbutz-owned land have not been resolved.

Kibbutz movement leaders said they have reached a compromise agreement regarding the economically healthier kibbutzim's assistance to the weaker ones, financially and by means of land sales.

As part of the debt arrangement plan, the kibbutzim have to raise about NIS 2 billion from the sale of their land.

The accumulated debts of all the country's kibbutzim now stands at more than NIS 5.7b.

The compromise agreement

primarily affects kibbutzim in the central part of the country, where land is more expensive. These kibbutzim will have to give up land to help other kibbutzim located in the periphery and at the borders.

The proposed agreement includes three possible routes kibbutzim can take to contribute to the assistance fund.

The first one involves a kibbutz donating NIS 5m-NIS 8m. to the fund, equal to about 5% of the value of the land the kibbutz owns. The second route calls for a kibbutz donation of 2%-5% of the land it owns.

The third option is intended for kibbutzim which are unwilling to contribute to the arrangement in the near future. These kibbutzim will be obliged to make a future donation of 5% of the value of their land.

The kibbutz movement leaders said they are confident all the kibbutzim will agree to the compromise agreement.

"Between two thirds and three quarters of the kibbutzim are in favor of the agreement, including the economically healthier kibbutzim," Efrati said. "So far, not even one kibbutz has rejected the plan."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Mr. Deal buys Motorola Communication (Israel) division: Motorola Communication's (Israel) micro-electronic division has been purchased by consultancy Mr. Deal and several private investors. Mr. Deal, owned by former Unifon Bank senior managers Menahem Firth and Menahem Edich and businessman Avraham Irani, will own 50 percent of the new company, renamed Tetra Electronics Industries.

The factory produces MCM and Hybrid chips for clients—including Scitex, Elbit and the Defense Ministry. Motorola Communication has obligated itself to purchase about \$2 million worth of Tetra components for each of the next two years.

Business Assoc. opens Bnei Brak branch serving harudi women: The Israel Small Business Association, in association with the Bnei Brak Municipality, has opened a branch serving harudi women entrepreneurs. "There is a real need in Bnei Brak for this type of center," because harudi women lack the marketable professional training demanded by the job market at large, ISBA coordinator Naomi Liran said.

Baram warns ministry not to obstruct request for charter flights: Tourism Minister Uzi Baram said yesterday that if the Transport Ministry continues to obstruct a request by Sunquest, a giant tour organizer in Canada, to organize charter flights to Israel, he would raise the issue in the cabinet.

Israel Shipyards workers' request for new contract rejected: The Treasury rejected the Israel Shipyards workers request for a new contract following a threatened a work slowdown yesterday morning. Israel Shipyards workers said the Treasury would not allow the increase in salary on the grounds that the company does not have sufficient funds.

Koor Industries raises NIS 21.5 million on issue: More than 98.5 percent of Koor Industries' series 1 warrant holders, whose expiration date was yesterday, exercised their warrants. Koor Industries raised NIS 21.5 million on the issue.

Agriculture Ministry plans to eliminate 76 positions: The Agriculture Ministry plans to eliminate 76 positions over the next few months. The ministry said the cutbacks, mainly in the training and agriculture research division, are in the framework of decisions made by the government two years ago.

Egyptian bank helps finance loan for Israel

GALIT LIPKIS BECK and DOUGLAS DAVIS

NATIONAL Bank of Egypt is among the banks participating in a syndicate organized by Bank Leumi UK and Chemical Bank that raised a DM 130 million credit line for the Israeli government.

This is the first time an Arab bank has participated in financing a loan for Israel.

The loan is for financing the purchase of German buses.

The other banks participating in the syndicate are Banco Di Napoli, Commerzbank International, Dresdner Bank London Branch and National Westminster Bank.

The Royal Bank of Scotland, the Chase Manhattan Bank, Re-

Meitav head: Regulations in new mutual fund law will push up management costs

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

THE many requirements included in the framework of the new mutual fund supervision and control regulations will significantly increase the funds' management costs, Meitav general manager Zvi Stepak said at a seminar on the new law this week.

Stepak predicted the rise in management costs will push small fund managers out of the market, increasing the big players' share.

He said new funds have not been established since the implementation of the new law four months ago.

Prof. Yossef Gross, head of Tel Aviv University's law and management faculty, said the new law creates a doubling of responsibilities, since the Securities Authority and Supervisor of Capital Markets are in charge of supervising mutual funds.

Gross said the new law has increased the responsibility of the directors serving on mutual fund companies' board of directors.

He said it is unclear if mutual fund companies can find suitable candidates to serve as directors.

Intel agrees to replace flawed Pentium

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (Reuters) - Trying to quell one of the biggest public relations disasters ever in the computer industry, Intel Corp. said yesterday it will replace Pentium computer chips for any consumer who wants to make the swap.

Intel, the world's largest chip maker, apologized for its previous policy on the flawed microprocessor as it launched the replacement program at the height of the key Christmas selling season. It said it would give details on how much the program cost next month.

Intel continued to insist that worries about the Pentium microprocessor, the "brain" that handles the central operations of personal computers, were overblown.

But it conceded it may have upset consumers with its earlier policy, which put the burden on consumers to show that the chip flaw affected them.

"Our previous policy was to talk with users to determine whether their needs required replacement of the processor," said Intel Chief Executive Andrew Grove. "To some people, this policy seemed arrogant and uncaring. We apologize."

"What caused our change in policy was continued unhappiness by customers for what they saw as a high-handed policy of us deciding who needs a replacement," Grove said in a conference call. "That policy clearly rankled some people."

Grove stressed that Intel still believes the flaw in the Pentium "is technically an extremely minor problem" that would affect a very small number of users.

Intel has maintained that the chance of an average computer user encountering any problem remained remote. It said the problem occurs "in floating point divide operations once every nine billion random number pairs."

Intel has said this happens only in sophisticated computer operations and "almost no one will ever encounter the flaw."

Starting today, Intel will run large advertisements in major newspapers across the country and later in Japan and Europe apologizing for the Pentium flaw and for Intel's handling of customer inquiries and offering new ones.

"To owners of Pentium-based processors and the PC community, we at Intel wish to sincerely apologize for our handling of the recently publicized Pentium pro-

WORLD BRIEFS

Fed decides not to raise rates: The US Federal Reserve ended an almost four-hour meeting yesterday without announcing any rise in interest rates. The Fed has already hiked rates six times this year to head off inflation and extend the expansion. *Reuters*

Trade gap widens on record shortfall with Japan: A record shortfall on trade with Japan drove the October trade deficit on goods and services sharply higher, the Commerce Department said yesterday. The monthly gap in bilateral business with Japan soared 23.9 percent from September to \$6.66 billion in October as imports from that country hit a record \$11.3b. *Reuters*

German M3 hits target for first time in '94: German money supply growth slowed to within the Bundesbank's target range for the first time this year in November, helping to restore the tattered image of the Bundesbank's monetary targeting policy. The Bundesbank said annualized growth of M3 slowed to 6.0 percent in November from 6.8% in October, hitting the top of its 4%-6% target ceiling. *Reuters*

De Beers reports fall in diamond sales: South African diamond giant De Beers yesterday reported a 2.7 percent fall in sales of rough diamonds through its Central Selling Organization, hurt by sales of Russian gems outside the CSO network and the outbreak of plague in India. *Reuters*

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Bids should be submitted not later than 12 noon on January 31, 1995.

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS				
Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (21.12.94)				
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	5.825	6.125	6.750	
Pound sterling (£100,000)	4.700	5.375	6.125	
German mark (DM 200,000)	0.555	0.550	0.550	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.618	0.618	0.618	
Yen (10 million yen)	0.750	0.875	1.000	
(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)				
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (20.12.94)				
CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rates*
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
Currency basket	3.3450	3.3220	2.96	3.3694
U.S. dollar	3.0194	3.0559	2.96	3.0380
German mark	1.9170	1.9441	1.86	1.9326
Pound sterling	4.7000	4.7703	4.61	4.7348
French franc	0.5550	0.5607	0.54	0.5528
Japanese yen (100)	3.0032	3.0516	2.96	3.0289
Dutch florin	1.7118	1.7388	1.68	1.7111
Swiss franc	2.2938	2.3255	2.22	2.2938
Swedish krona	0.4007	0.4054	0.39	0.4021
Norwegian krona	0.4388	0.4450	0.43	0.4420
Danish krone	0.4684	0.4751	0.46	0.4687
Finland mark	0.6189	0.6276	0.61	0.6234
Canadian dollar	2.1582	2.1887	2.12	2.1769
Australian dollar	2.2354	2.2683	2.22	2.2557
S. African rand	0.6483	0.6603	0.63	0.6485
Belgian franc (10)	0.5329	0.5451	0.52	0.5329
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7246	2.7830	2.68	2.7424
Italian lira (1000)	0.4384	0.4451	0.43	0.4384
Jordanian dinar	1.8285	1.8543	1.79	1.8285
Egyptian pound	—	—	4.19	4.45
ECU	3.8486	3.7001	0.88	0.9563
Irish punt	4.8449	4.7104	4.54	4.6724
Spanish peseta (100)	2.2777	2.3058	2.22	2.2814
* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.				
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI				

National soccer team just misses Top 40

ORI LEWIS and agencies

ISRAEL'S national soccer team has jumped from 57th to 42nd in FIFA's year-end rankings for 1994, issued in Zurich yesterday.

Israel's improved form of late has seen the side jump into the top-50, sandwiched between Wales, which dropped from 29th to 41st place, and Slovakia, which remains in 43rd position.

World champion Brazil was top of the group and Croatia the most improved team, 122nd to 62nd after a string of successes, including last month's European championship qualifying win over Italy.

In local soccer action yesterday, Maccabi Tel Aviv and Maccabi Haifa both notched up away wins in outstanding Toto Cup matches.

The Tel Avivians came away with a 3-1 win from Maccabi Netanya, while Haifa beat Hapoel Tel Aviv 3-0 at Bloomfield.

FIFA year-end rankings (1993 positions in parentheses)

1. (3) Brazil	67.18
2. (1) Spain	61.20
3. (2) Sweden	61.20
4. (5) Italy	61.25
5. (4) Germany	61.25
6. (7) Netherlands	59.91
7. (12) Switzerland	58.30
8. (4) Norway	58.11
9. (10) Ireland	57.63
10. (6) Argentina	56.67
11. (13) Romania	56.61
12. (16) Nigeria	54.29
13. (14) Russia	54.26
14. (15) Denmark	54.26
15. (18) Mexico	53.53
16. (31) Bulgaria	53.53
17. (21) Colombia	52.74
18. (11) England	52.74
19. (15) France	52.30
20. (20) Portugal	50.87
21. (27) Zambia	47.15
22. (28) Egypt	46.25
23. (29) United States	47.84
24. (30) Belgium	47.06
25. (32) Ivory Coast	47.06
26. (37) Ghana	46.96
27. (38) Saudi Arabia	44.76
28. (34) Greece	44.55
29. (28) Poland	43.86
30. (32) Tunisia	43.81
31. (22) Cameroon	43.67
32. (24) Scotland	43.04
33. (30) Morocco	42.98
34. (4) Czech Republic	41.43
35. (41) South Korea	40.60
36. (43) Japan	40.41
37. (17) Uruguay	39.10
38. (48) Finland	38.67
39. (47) Iceland	38.68
40. (53) China	37.76
41. (25) Wales	37.03
42. (57) Israel	37.40
43. (1) Slovakia	37.14
44. (58) Bolivia	37.03
45. (33) Northern Ireland	36.79
46. (51) United Arab Emirates	35.54
47. (53) Chile	35.25
48. (52) Turkey	35.22
49. (58) Austria	35.56
50. (56) Senegal	35.27

Le Tissier scores late winner

SOUTHAMPTON (AP) — English striker Matthew Le Tissier fired home a free-kick in the second minute of injury time as Southampton gained a 2-1 victory over Aston-Villa Monday and left Brian Little's team in deep relegation trouble.

Villa had fought back well in the second half after Saints' center back Richard Hall had headed home a cross by Le Tissier in the ninth minute.

Goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar made a stunning diving save to keep out a shot from John Fashanu in the 49th minute, but he was beaten 10 minutes from the end.

Villa defender Shaun Teale committed a foul seven yards outside his penalty area and Le Tissier hit the game winner.



NEW ORLEANS (AP) — In a game that meant little, the Dallas Cowboys were hurt a lot on Monday night when they lost Emmitt Smith.

Smith, the league's leading scorer and the key to the Super Bowl champions' running game, went down in the third quarter of a 24-16 victory over the New Orleans Saints with a pulled left hamstring. He was helped to the sideline, unable to put weight on the leg, then was taken off on a cart.

The injury overshadowed a workmanlike win for Dallas (12-3), which already has clinched the NFC East title and the second spot in the conference playoffs behind San Francisco.

The loss erased what little chance the Saints (6-9) had of making the playoffs as a wild card. They were victimized by two tipped passes that Dallas returned for touchdowns, digging too deep a hole.

New Orleans had a chance to tie, however, when Dallas' running game disappeared without Smith. Derek Brown scored on a 4-yard run with 5:37 remaining and the Saints got the ball back moments later. But linebacker Darrin Smith got his second interception of the game.

After a sloppy first half, the Cowboys got serious with a masterful 8½-minute drive to open the third quarter. Smith scored from the 1, completing a 74-yard, 16-play march with his 22nd TD of the season, third most in NFL history.



HAMSTRUNG — Cowboys' Emmitt Smith (22) is helped off the field after injuring his hamstring during 3rd-quarter action. (AP)

Maccabi TA on top at halfway mark

JOEL GORDIN

THE second half — the 14th round — of the National Basketball League gets underway tonight with a full slate of seven games. The highlights of the first half have been:

● Maccabi Tel Aviv's recapture of the league's summit after trailing Maccabi Rishon LeZion for 10 rounds

● Hapoel Tel Aviv's 4-point penalty for financial irregularities.

The Ussishkin dwellers boast an 8-4 record (their yet-to-be-scheduled game with Hapoel Gvat was snowed out), tied in wins with Hapoel Galil Elyon and Hapoel Jerusalem, and trailing Maccabi Tel Aviv, Rishon and Hapoel Eilat. As a result of its point docking however, Hapoel Tel Aviv is third from the bottom, in front of only Hapoel Givatayim (2-11) and wretched Bnei Ramat Gan (0-13), the two most likely candidates for relegation.

● The failure of Hapoel Holon (7-6) and Hapoel Galil Elyon (8-5) to come up to expectations. Both had been fancied as challengers for the top spot. Galil shares fourth place with Hapoel Jerusalem, while Holon is sixth

(with Bnei Herzliya). The main interest in the second half will be centered around the contest to join Maccabi Tel Aviv in the Final Four. Despite a three-game losing streak, Rishon is still the strongest candidate. Holon, spurred on by the appointment of Ralph Klein as head coach, seems about to make a strong comeback. The other place is wide open and will be contested by Eilat, Hapoel Jerusalem, Galil, Herzliya — and Hapoel Tel Aviv if the club succeeds in raising enough funds to "buy back" the missing four points.

Tonight's games: Hapoel Gvat v Hapoel Holon, Hapoel Galil Elyon v Hapoel Haifa, Maccabi Tel Aviv v Maccabi Ramat Gan, Hapoel Jerusalem v Maccabi Jerusalem, Givatayim v Hapoel Tel Aviv, Hapoel Eilat v Maccabi Rishon LeZion and Bnei Herzliya v Bnei Ramat Gan.

NBL at the Halfway Mark

	W	L	Pts.
1. Maccabi Tel Aviv	12	1	25
2. Maccabi Rishon	10	3	23
3. Hapoel Eilat	9	4	22
4. Hapoel Galil Elyon	8	5	21
5. Hapoel Jerusalem	8	5	21
6. Bnei Herzliya	7	6	20
7. Hapoel Holon	7	6	20
8. Maccabi Ramat Gan	5	9	18
9. Hapoel Gvat	5	9	17
10. Hapoel Haifa	4	9	17
11. Hapoel Tel Aviv*	4	9	16
12. Hapoel Givatayim	3	11	15
13. Hapoel Rishon LeZion	2	12	13
14. Bnei Ramat Gan	0	13	13

* Hapoel Tel Aviv has been penalized four points for financial irregularities.

Cavs' defense holds Bulls to 19-year low

CHICAGO (AP) — The Cleveland Cavaliers, the NBA's top defensive team, held the Chicago Bulls to a franchise record for fewest points in a 77-63 victory on Monday night.

John Williams and Tyrone Hill dominated the boards as the Cavaliers won their sixth straight game.

Chicago's previous low was 65 points at Phoenix in March 1975. The Bulls' lowest-scoring home game had been last season's 95-71 loss to Miami.

The offensive failure was a complete one for Chicago, which shot 37 percent from the field,

42% from the free-throw line and 17% from 3-point range. The Bulls also committed 20 turnovers.

Williams had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and Hill added 16 points and 17 boards for the Cavs, who had been holding opponents to 89.3 points per game. It was the 19th time Cleveland has held a team under 100 this season.

Scottie Pippen led the Bulls with 14 points.

Suns 113, Bulls 102

Wesley Person scored 10 of his 12 points in the first 5:27 of the fourth quarter as host Phoenix won its seventh straight.

Cleveland 77, Chicago 63
Phoenix 113, Washington 102
Denver 104, Boston 85
Only games scheduled.

NEW YORK (AP) — Ivan Lendl, who once ruled men's tennis with an iron will and booming forehand, retired from the sport yesterday because of a back ailment.

"I enjoyed playing the game, had a lot of great times, and I will miss it," Lendl said.

The right-hander, who held the world's No. 1 ranking for a record 270 weeks, fell out of the top 10 last year for the first time since 1979. He is the tour's all-time career prize money leader, having earned more than \$20 million, and was ranked No. 1 in the world at the end of eight different years.

"It is never easy," he said when asked about the difficulty of retiring from a sport he once dominated. "It is not something you deal with every day."

But the 34-year-old native of Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, now ranked 54th by the ATP Tour, said he made his decision after his doctor told him his back would not get any better. Lendl is a naturalized US citizen.

"After the US Open, I've had more and more problems," he said. "I've even tried to play a couple of senior events and found I couldn't do that."

Lendl won the US Open in 1985-87 and was runner-up in 1982-84, 1988 and 1989, reaching the title match a record-tying eight consecutive years. During that period, anyone caught in the buzzsaw of Lendl's forehand was left in shreds.

The last couple of years have been different. He made it to the fourth round of the Australian Open, where he ran into eventual winner Pete Sampras. At the French Open, where he had won three titles, he was a first-round loser to Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch. He skipped Wimbledon, then was forced to retire during his second-round match at the US Open in September.

And, after being the only man to win at least one tournament crown every year from 1980 through 1993, this year saw him go title-less on the ATP Tour.

Mass meeting for NHL players today

NEW YORK (AP) — The National Hockey League Players Association will hold a mass membership meeting in Toronto today, virtually assuring there will be no labor negotiations at least until tomorrow.

Hundreds of players are expected to attend. They were to start arriving in Toronto yesterday for their meeting with Bob Goodenow, executive director of the NHLPA.

"It's an update on the negotiating sessions," union spokesman Steve McAllister said.

The last time the players held such a meeting in November, about 200 showed up. Hundreds of players are expected to attend this time, as well.

If a settlement is reached soon, January, February and March will still be available to play 50-52 games, about a game every 2.2 days, which is the general average over an 84-game schedule.

England grabs unlikely win before 2nd Test

TOOWOOMBA (Reuters) — England recorded a dramatic and unlikely victory over Queensland yesterday to bolster its resolve before the second Test against Australia, starting on Saturday.

The tourists dismissed Queensland during the final session for 314 to secure a narrow 37-run win after the home side had appeared poised for victory by reaching 231 without losing a wicket.

Despite the success, England captain Mike Atherton was far from thrilled by his side's performance. "We played only so-so as we have done for much of the tour," he said.

After setting Queensland a daunting target of 352 in 70 overs, England was punished by openers Matthew Hayden and Trevor

Barsby before taking all 10 wickets for just 83 runs.

The English attack looked toothless and the bowlers' waywardness was punished as Hayden and Barsby raced to centuries in a first wicket partnership worth 231 runs.

That stand, a record for Queensland against England, ensured that the visitors went for 95 overs without claiming a wicket following the unbeaten partnership of 205 between Andrew Symonds and Jimmy Maher in the first innings.

But when Hayden, who made 119, and Barsby (101) fell in successive overs after tea, England gradually whittled its way through the Queensland line-up with spinner Philip Tufnell taking five for 71, as the bats-

Mitchell Butler made three 3-pointers in the final quarter for the Bulls, who got within six twice in the final 3½ minutes.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Utah	16	8	.667	—
Houston	13	9	.591	1.5
Dallas	11	11	.500	2.5
Denver	12	9	.571	2.5
San Antonio	11	9	.550	3
Minnesota	5	17	.227	10

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Phoenix	18	5	.783	—
Seattle	14	7	.667	4
LA Lakers	13	8	.619	4
Portland	11	9	.550	5.5
Sacramento	11	10	.524	6
Golden State	8	14	.364	9.5
LA Clippers	3	19	.136	14.5

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Treasury: Capital wasted funds on road without its go-ahead

Long-awaited French Hill interchange to open today

THE Jerusalem Municipality has wasted millions of shekels on a proposed highway that was to complement the new French Hill interchange, according to Treasury officials.

The long-awaited opening of the interchange is scheduled for today.

A Treasury spokesman said the municipality started work on the new highway, Route 16, without first getting a commitment for Treasury funding.

After studying the proposal for the route - slated to link the Ma'aleh Adumim road with Route 1 by a four-lane tunnel through Mount Scopus - the Treasury recently ruled it was obsolete, given the new French Hill interchange, the spokesman said.

"The Treasury never approved carrying out the project... and [after carrying out studies] has decided that it would not be

worthwhile to build," the spokesman said.

But instead of waiting for the Treasury decision, the former and present city administrations invested several million shekels in construction of the road over the past two years, according to the spokesman.

Work was halted earlier this year when funds ran out, and the construction site just under the Hebrew University's Mount Scopus campus was abandoned.

City officials strongly denied the allegations of waste, and cautioned that if the Treasury does not fund the proposed highway, northern Jerusalem's traffic will remain a mess even with the new French Hill interchange.

"The highway [Route 16] is vital to solving the traffic problems in northern Jerusalem," said city

BILL HUTMAN

councilman Shmuel Shkedi, who holds the transport portfolio at City Hall.

Between 20 and 25 percent of the vehicles that today reach the French Hill interchange come from the direction of Ma'aleh Adumim, Shkedi said. Traffic jams will remain bad at the interchange if Route 16 is not built, he added.

"The French Hill interchange is only stage one. Without stage two [Route 16], we will remain far away from a solution," Shkedi said.

Shkedi said construction of Route 16 was estimated at NIS 70 million and that, contrary to what Finance Ministry officials say, studies had shown the project to be cost-effective.

Some NIS 6 million have already been invested in the high-

way, from money allocated to the city by the Transport Ministry, Shkedi added.

Shkedi, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar are slated to attend the opening celebrations of the first section of the French Hill interchange this afternoon.

The first span of the two-span overpass has been completed at the intersection and will already be open to traffic as of 5 a.m. this morning, a city spokesman said. It will be closed from 10 a.m. to noon for the ceremony, and then reopened.

Until the second span is completed, the two-lane overpass will be open only to traffic from the north between the hours of 1 a.m. to 10 a.m., and from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. to traffic from both directions.

Lack of portfolio keeping Yi'ud from coalition

SARAH HONIG

YI'UD MK Gonen Segev yesterday rejected the notion that a new portfolio - infrastructure - be created for him by splitting it off from the Energy Ministry and combining it with bits and pieces of other ministries.

As of last night, the main obstacle to the entry of Segev and MK Alex Goldfarb into the coalition was that there is no portfolio to give Segev.

A meeting planned for last night between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Segev was put off until today, in the hope some solution would present itself. Rabin is to take up the problem with Labor ministers today.

Segev hoped to be given the Energy and Infrastructure Ministry and have Goldfarb appointed a deputy minister in a different

ministry, but Police and Energy Minister Moshe Shahal refuses to yield the energy portfolio.

Now, after the government initiated and passed legislation to circumvent a ruling by the High Court of Justice against admitting Segev to the government, there is no portfolio to give him.

The idea to build an infrastructure portfolio came from Rabin. He proposed to take some infrastructure activities away from Shahal, while also taking the sewerage department from the Interior Ministry, the Water Commission from the Agriculture Ministry, and possibly the Public Works Department from the Housing Ministry.

All the ministers involved,

however, have already refused to go along with Rabin's suggestions.

Segev finally said yesterday that he has "no wish to get an artificial ministerial creation. Nor do I want to be a minister without portfolio. In my informal understanding with Rabin, we agreed that I was to get a real portfolio with real substance and not bits from here and there stitched together. What I now want is for Rabin to live up to his part of the bargain."

The third Yi'ud MK, Esther Salmovitz, is refusing to join her faction colleagues in the coalition, believing their joining represents a betrayal of voters who voted for Tsomet, where the three originated. She met with

Rabin to ask his assistance in separating herself from the Yi'ud faction without aborting her entire political career.

Salmovitz is restricted by legislation that denies financing to a single MK who splits from a faction, and denies that MK the right to run in the next Knesset election on any list unless he or she resigns six months before the election.

Salmovitz would like to return to Tsomet, and has asked the other two to formally split from her. Segev and Goldfarb refused.

Item adds:

Moshe Yemin, head of the Tsomet branch in Rishon LeZion, petitioned the High Court yesterday, asking it to force the Yi'ud members to resign from the Knesset.



Former Shas MK Yair Levy (right) talks with his attorney, Yehuda Weinstein, at a Supreme Court hearing yesterday on Levy's appeal against his sentence. (Isaac Harari)

Yair Levy asks Supreme Court to uphold his plea bargain

FORMER Shas MK Yair Levy's attorney yesterday asked the Supreme Court to uphold a plea bargain which would reduce Levy's sentence from five to three years' imprisonment.

Attorney Yehuda Weinstein told the court that it should overturn the decision of Tel Aviv District Court Judge Arye Segelson, who rejected a plea bargain reached between Weinstein and the prosecution. Accepting the plea bargain would ease the bur-

den on the justice system by hastening the legal process, Weinstein argued.

During the hearing on the appeal yesterday, Weinstein criticized Segelson, saying the judge had been "unusually affected by the media" in his decision to reject the plea bargain and sentence Levy to five years in jail.

Attorney Yehoshua Resnik, head of the criminal division in the State Attorney's Office, said

he stands by the plea bargain but could not say that the sentence issued by Segelson was not appropriate.

Supreme Court Justices Eliezer Goldberg, Elishu Mazza, and Michael Cheshin asked Resnik to take a clear position on the issue. "Either you support the plea bargain or you are opposed to it," Mazza told Resnik.

The justices said they would give their decision on the appeal at a later date. (Item)

Health Ministry: Extra coverage for those who ask for it

JUDY SIEGEL

THE Health Ministry will prohibit the health funds from automatically including all members in supplementary health insurance schemes, except those who opt out of them.

Ministry deputy director-general Gabi Bin-Nun said insurers will be able to include in these programs only those who specifically ask to participate.

The ministry will, in the next few days, inform all the health funds what they may include under their supplementary health

insurance schemes, said Bin-Nun. All the schemes will have to be approved in advance by Health Minister Ephraim Sneh, he said.

The insurers may not include any medical services that are provided to all residents through the basket of health services instituted by the national health insurance system starting January 1. Until now, transplants abroad have been included in supple-

mentary health insurance schemes: from January, they will be included in the basket.

The Maccabi health fund has sent a letter to all its members urging them not to cancel their standing bank orders, because this would cancel their membership in its Keren Maccabi and Maccabi Magen supplementary health insurance programs. Anyone who cancels participation and then wants to rejoin will lose

benefits or pay higher rates, Maccabi says.

Kupat Holim Meuhedet has also adopted the opt-out policy for its Meuhedet Adif and Meuhedet Zahav supplementary insurance plans. Meuhedet sources said they had not yet received clear explanations from the ministry.

Kupat Holim Clalit yesterday announced it would offer a new supplementary insurance scheme to its members through the Dikla company.

Second 'Ma'ariv' journalist, Yonatan Gefen, identifies his voice on tape in wiretap case

MA'ARIV journalist Yonatan Gefen yesterday identified his voice as being on a tape secretly made on a wiretap of the paper's computer department chief, Giora Gilat.

The tape, which includes recordings of several conversations Gilat had, was allegedly found at the offices of the Shaf company. It included conversations with journalist Amnon Abramowitz, who subsequent-

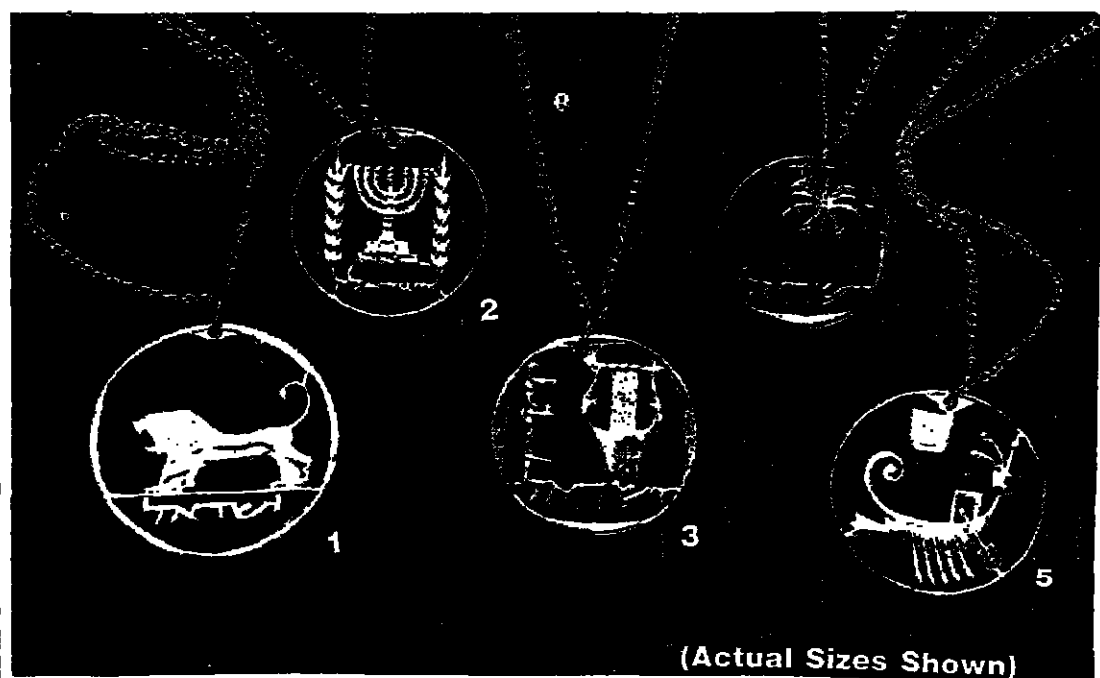
ly resigned from the paper. Ma'ariv filed two complaints with police about wiretapping, one about the wiretapping itself, and the other charging fabrication of evidence against the newspaper.

Meanwhile, the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court yesterday ordered the district attorney to give prosecution evidence to the lawyers of Rafi Freidan and Ya'acov Tsar, accused of

wiretapping the phones of media personalities and journalists. The evidence includes testimony to police by publishers Arnon Mozes of Yediot Aharanot and Ofer Nimrodi of Ma'ariv.

The court also instructed the prosecution to hand over relevant evidence relating to the investigation of Bezak employee Baruch Rabinstein. (Item)

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Patt promises long debate on change in meat import law

Jerusalem Post Staff

KNESSET Economics Committee chairman Gideon Patt said yesterday that proposals to forbid the import of all nonkosher meat and meat products represent a substantial change in the status quo and would have to be extensively debated.

Patt said that if the restrictions on meat imports are approved, these would likely lead to demands for similar restrictions on

imports of milk products, canned goods, and others.

Therefore, the committee plans to hear out industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish, the meat importers, civil rights groups, consumer groups, and other interested parties that had asked to appear before it.

MK Yitzhak Levy of the National Religious Party said the

law, which forbids the import of nonkosher frozen meat but does not specify other types of nonkosher meat, does not fulfill the government's promises. He said that Harish had also given import permits for nonkosher meat products to Jews, not only to Christians and Moslems.

Moshe Gafni (United Torah

Judaism) said that all the religious parties want to do is anchor the status quo in law. In the past - whether to protect local producers or because the government handled all frozen meat imports - no nonkosher meat was imported.

MK Naomi Hazan (Meretz) called the bills are regressive. "Maybe we had such proposals in the Middle Ages," she said.

House Committee rejects Moledet dispute compromise

THE Knesset House Committee yesterday rejected a compromise proposal aimed at resolving the dispute in Moledet between faction chairman Rehavam Ze'evi

and MK Shaul Guttman, on the grounds that it was illegal.

Ze'evi has asked the commit-

tee to rule that by his actions, Guttman has effectively defected from the faction, even though Guttman insists that he continues to be a member in good standing.

The dispute between the two involves a crucial matter of parliamentary precedent. It could also determine Guttman's political future.

If the committee accepts Ze'evi's demand, it would mark the first time the Knesset has overruled an MK and determined against his will that he has defected from his faction. In practical terms, it would mean, in accordance with a recent amendment to the Basic Law: Government, that Guttman would not receive party funding for the next election campaign.

Because of the constitutional aspects of the issue, and because committee members are loathe to

intervene in the internal disputes of political parties, a group of MKs, spearheaded by Eli Dayan (Labor), tried to find an out-of-committee solution so the committee would not have to vote on the matter.

Dayan, Ze'evi, and the legal adviser of the committee presented a proposal offering Guttman semi-legal status. According to the proposal, "MK Shaul Guttman will receive, as much as possible, the status and rights that the House Rule and parliamentary custom accord to a single-person faction, except for party funding."

Committee chairman Hagai Merom said he would not "go along with a maneuver based on an illegal agreement. It is unacceptable to make a joke of the status of a faction." The committee supported Merom and told the negotiators to come up with a new proposal.

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